

The Complete History of Japanese Sex Cinema

日本の成人映画全史

BEHIND
THE PINK
CURTAIN

裏

Jasper Sharp





**BEHIND THE PINK CURTAIN
THE COMPLETE HISTORY OF JAPANESE SEX CINEMA**

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Naomi Tani in Mamoru Watanabe's *Naomi Tani: Tied Up!* (1977). ©Shintoho

Back cover illustration:

British quad poster for Nikkatsu's *Emmanuelle in Tokyo* (Akira Katô, 1975).

Frontispiece illustration:

Hotaru Hazuki in Takuaki Hashiguchi's *Mansion of the Senses: Wife's Ascension* (2004). ©Shintoho

Title page illustration:

The character 'ura', literally 'behind', 'reverse' or 'inside', is used in Japan to mean 'behind the scenes' or 'exposé'.

Contents pages illustrations:

First page, top to bottom:

Revenge of the Pearl Queen (Toshio Shimura, 1956); *Chronicle of an Affair* (Kôji Wakamatsu, 1965);
Continuation: Chronicle of an Affair (Kan Mukai, 1966); *Go Go Second Time Virgin* (Kôji Wakamatsu, 1969); *The Sun's Navel* (Kôji Wakamatsu, 1965).

Second page, top to bottom:

New: Chronicle of an Affair (Osamu Yamashita, 1967); *Cruel Passion Drawing* (Yûki Takeda, 1970); *Crevise of Skin* (Takahisa Zeze, 2004);
Greedy Housewives (Sachi Hamano, 2003); *The Secret Garden* (Hisayasu Satô, 1987).

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BEHIND THE PINK CURTAIN



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Promo shot for Yutaka Ikejima's *Family Gets Rude Chapter 1: Perverts' Fun* (2004), featuring mother and daughter Akane Yazaki and Azusa Sakai. ©Shinto

Introduction

My first encounter with *pinku eiga* was in 1989. I wasn't even aware I was watching a pink film at the time, nor even that such a genre existed, yet alone what a large part it would play in my later life. The title in question was *Violated Angels*, directed by Kôji Wakamatsu, a figure who looms large within these pages. I wasn't particularly concerned that the film was Japanese either. My main passion at the time was horror movies, and the reason I was drawn to the film, after spotting it in the listings of London's legendary Scala Cinema, was its rather curious inclusion in Phil Hardy's *Aurum Film Encyclopedia: Horror*, my bible for movie fandom at the time. True to the Scala's characteristically eclectic approach to programming, it played on a double bill with Shôhei Imamura's 1983 Cannes Grand Prix-winner *The Ballad of Narayama*. Both films appeared to raise far more questions than they answered, especially in the mind of an 18-year-old freshly arrived in the capital from the boondocks of North Devon and weaned on fantasy worlds populated by Lucio Fulci's lumbering reanimated ghouls and the late-night Gothic chills of Hammer.

Wakamatsu's film proved particularly perplexing. What the hell was this? A sex film which wasn't exactly sexy, which not only didn't appear to have a story but also had barely any dialogue, and which made oblique references to political circumstances a world and a generation apart from the Thatcher-era Britain I then inhabited. Hardy's explanation wasn't much help: "In common with ultra-leftist groups that turned to terrorism and other irrational cultural and political practises, Wakamatsu conflates the psychopathology of psychosis and its utopian fantasy of dissolution into an oceanic-maternal space (the lost paradise) with revolutionary politics... Wakamatsu depicts the logical conclusion of the notion that unbridled sexual activity is a legitimate 'revolt' against sexual/political alienation." Yes, but what did any of this actually *mean*? I filed away the experience and thought about it no more. And then, through a series of coincidences and misadventures that could fill up a book in its own right, some 15 years later I wound up in Tokyo, which is where the name Wakamatsu popped up again.

This book is the fruit of my attempts to unravel the mysteries of an entire cinematic substrata of films whose existence has barely been noted by previous writers in the English language. It comes from the viewpoint that moving images have a life of their own quite divorced from reality, but one that connects with the real world in fascinating ways, and that in moral terms, pornography is neither good nor bad. It just "is". Exactly *what* it "is" is one question I attempt to address within these pages.

It goes without saying that the book you now hold in your hands could never have come into existence without the assistance and encouragement of a good number of people, but I would like to thank Roland Domenig especially for introducing me to this mysterious world and its denizens. His advice and comments on early manuscripts have been invaluable in steering my research. Similarly a huge thank you to Alex Zahlten for so thoroughly picking through the text as it was being written, giving feedback and pointing out errors and inconsistencies, and to my Midnight Eye confrere, Tom Mes, for his help, enthusiasm and vigorous proofreading skills. Certainly the research stage would have been a lot more tricky were it not for the wonderful translation skills of Sharon Hayashi, Michael Arnold and Junko Sasaki, with whom I spent a good deal of my time in Tokyo mulling over these films and talking with their makers.

And then there are the directors themselves, who proved endlessly patient with my questioning, and supplied me with their less readily available works: Kôji Wakamatsu, Masao Adachi, Mamoru Watanabe, Kazuhiro Sano (thanks also for keeping the shochu flowing!), Hisayasu Satô, Toshiki Satô, Takahisa Zeze, Mitsuru Meike, Rei Sakamoto, Yûji Tajiri, Shinji Imaoka, Yoshitaka Kamata, Toshiro Enomoto, Ryûichi Hiroki, Toshiharu Ikeda, Takashi Ishii, Noboru Tanaka, Hideo Nakata and Tarô Araki.



above: Classic eroticism repackaged for a new generation: A 'chirashi', or flyer, for Uplink's line of Nippon Erotics DVD releases.

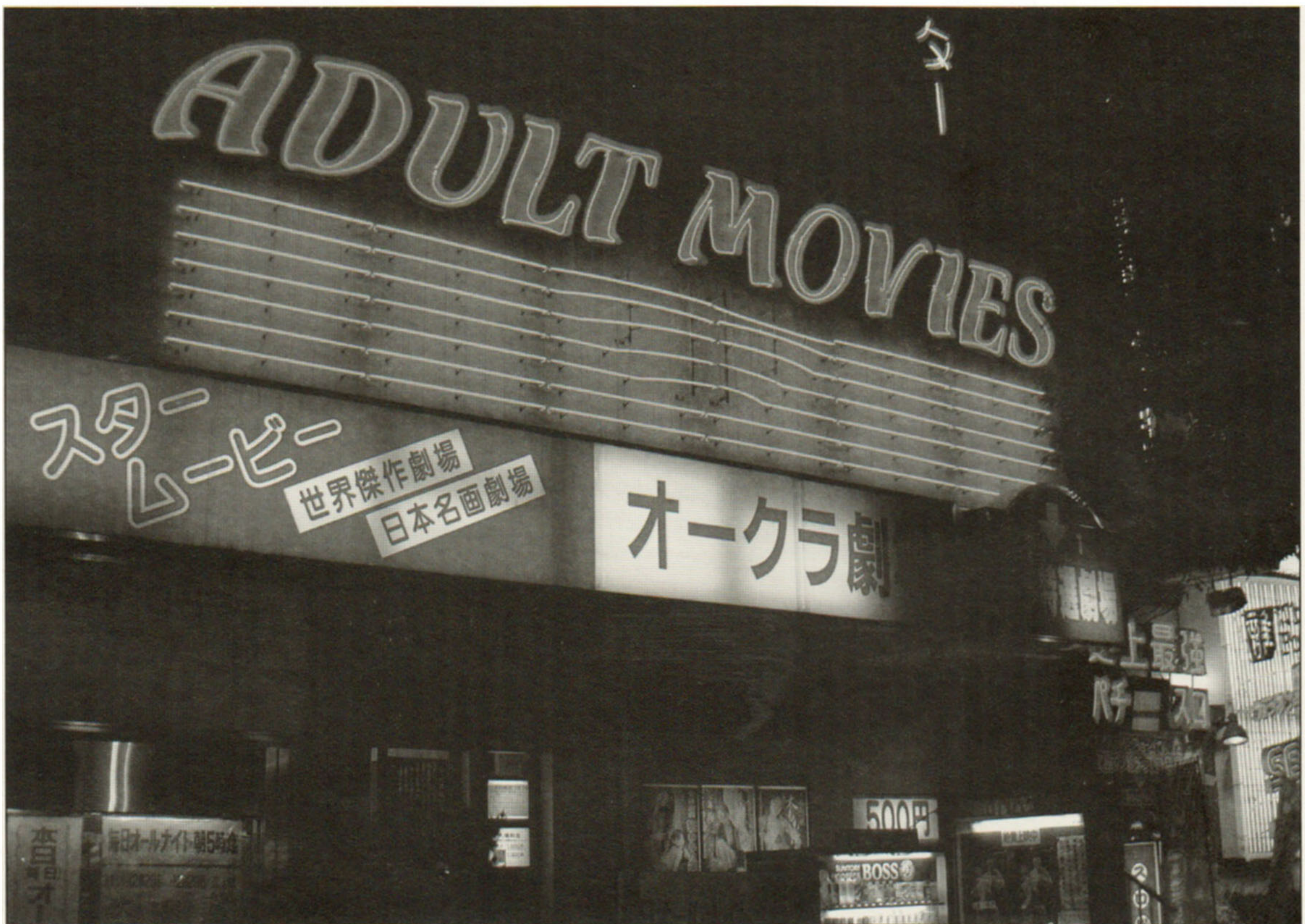
My heartfelt regards also go to Yumeka Sasaki, Hotaru Hazuki, Kôichi Imaizumi, Yôta Kawase (a memorable night singing Spandau Ballet classics on the karaoke...), the incredibly patient Keiko Satô of Kokuei, Kôichi Gotô and Akira Fukuhara of Shintocho (especially the latter, who was extremely generous in supplying me with videos and stills, and good conversation during our hikes up Mount Mitake), the ever-helpful Kazunori Sakaguchi of Stance, the wonderful Yasue Nobusawa of Nikkatsu, Shinji Komada of ENK and Kunihiro Tomioka of Planet Studyo +1 Osaka for arranging some invaluable private showings for me. This book also received invaluable input from Nicholas Rucka, Jason Gray, John Williams, Jom O' Rourke, Zeni, Dimitri Ianni, Johannes Schönherr, Stephen Cremin and Pete Tombs, who was notably gracious in allowing me to ransack his stills collection and pick his brains on the Filipino sex film industry. I'd also like to acknowledge my great debt to Aaron Gerow and Markus Nornes, both for inspiring me with their own writing and research, and for providing such an essential resource for discussing Japanese cinema in the form of the KineJapan mailing list and annual Kinema Club conferences. And of course Harvey Fenton of FAB Press, for responding so positively to my original book proposal with a record-breaking promptness. And last but by no means least, to all those readers whose encouragement and interest have spurred us on with *Midnight Eye* since its inception.

NB: A note on titles, names and transcriptions.

Transcription of Japanese words follows the Hepburn system, with the use of the circumflex on vowels denoting a long vowel sound (i.e. ô as in "boat", û as in "flute"). However, for the sake of clarity I've eschewed this convention for names of film companies known outside of Japan (for example, Shintocho rather than Shintôhō, Toei rather than Tôei, but Roppô Eiga and Sôzôsha, for those whose names are seldom written in English) and for place names, where I've adopted the familiar international spellings such as Tokyo and Osaka, as opposed to Tôkyô and Ôsaka (though Kyûshû and Hokkaidô are used instead of Kyushu and Hokkaido).

With regard to Japanese names, I have adopted the Western standard of given name first, and family name second. Though the Japanese naming convention states family first, given name second, this book is aimed at a non-Japanese reader. All of the Japanese names listed in the text are listed alongside their Japanese spelling in the appendices.

For information about the films' casts, year of release, runtime and Japanese titles, I have drawn heavily from the invaluable online resources of the Japanese Movie Database (www.jmdb.ne.jp), moderated by Y. Nomura, and the homepage for *PG* magazine (www2u.biglobe.ne.jp/~p-g/menu.htm), moderated by Yoshiyuki Hayashida.



above: Ôkura's 'World Masterpiece Theatre' (*Sekai Gessaku Gekijô*) in Ueno, Tokyo.
(picture by Jason Gray)

The Japanese Sex Film: Art or Industry?

On the shores of a remote lake high up in the mountains, a tribe of topless teens toting machine guns cavort around a trussed-up soldier wearing combat fatigues. A uniformed office lady on a crowded commuter train mews in ecstasy as a moustachioed creep fumbles beneath her skirt. A perverted social outcast lures sailor-suited schoolgirls to an abandoned truck container where he runs a buzzing sex aid over their denuded bodies and spatters their porcelain skins with various hues of spray-paint before brutally murdering them and disposing of their corpses in an acid bath. In a muddy cowshed in rural Nagano, a farmer sits down at his milking stool to attend to a naked girl on all fours, while on a rooftop high above the centre of Tokyo, a young woman writhes in bliss as the rubbery replica of the finger of none other than the President of the United States of America darts between her thighs and images of war play out on a TV screen behind her.¹

These are but a choice selection of some of the more outrageous images to hail from the wild and wicked world of the *pinku eiga*, or pink film, the genre of low-budget softcore sex movies that has graced specialist adult cinema screens across the Japanese nation, sometimes playing even further afield, since the early '60s. The basic definition of the pink film is an independently-produced movie, shot on 35mm film by professional or semi-professional casts and crews, whose main lure is its sexual content. What 'independent' means within the broader context of the Japanese film industry is one of the ideas this book will be looking at within the ensuing chapters. For now however, suffice to say that over the decades the pink industry has evolved a highly-structured production, distribution and exhibition system all of its own, operating in the shadowy penumbra of the mainstream.

"The West knows nothing of these pictures, nor should it,"² Donald Richie, the doyen of Japanese film criticism, once famously proclaimed. This book avers otherwise. With the mushrooming proliferation of DVD releases and the rise of the international film festival greasing the tracks, so that even the most obscure celluloid oddities manage to transcend the boundaries of time and culture to reach new audiences, an increasing number of these titles are making their way to new overseas audiences and being viewed in arenas quite distinct from those for which they were originally intended. Given the bizarre fan sub-culture and critical discourse that has built up around this sexy underground sector over the past 40 years, both within Japan and outside, some sort of explanation and historical evaluation seems long overdue.

From its very inception, these movies have accounted for a healthy chunk of the industry's total output. From the meagre handful of four titles released in 1962, the genre's popularity peaked in 1965 with a staggering 213 films.³ Though many believe pink to be on the wane, even taking 2003 as a recent sample year, one can note that a significant 89 out of the 287 domestically-produced films that screened in Japanese cinemas fell into this category, with a further 60 or so re-titled releases of older pink films (to put the figures in some sort of perspective, 335 foreign titles played Japanese cinemas that same year).⁴

Many domestic industries in Europe and the Americas can boast of similar, if not quite as sizeable, legacies of nudie flicks and sexploitation quickies in the '60s and '70s, before this particular sphere of filmmaking fell victim to the cheaper and far more profitable medium of video pornography during the '80s. The closest any other Asian country comes to Japan in terms of sex film production for the big screen is the Philippines, which presents a slightly unusual case in that it is the only Catholic state in the region. The 'bomba', 'bold', and 'pene' films were a notable aspect of



above: With tickets as cheap as ¥500 (under \$5), pink theatres are a perfect place to get away from the hubbub of the city and gather one's thoughts in the dark.

the Filipino movie industry, and onscreen copulation was even encouraged in the '80s under the Marcos regime in recognition of the fact that it was the most effective way of getting local audiences to see local films. Titles such as Celso Ad Castillo's *Virgin People* (1984), Elwood Perez's *Silip: Daughter of Eve* (1985) and Peque Gallaga's *Scorpio Nights* (1985) enjoyed very prominent releases (the latter played uncut at the Manila International Film Festival) – so much so that it becomes difficult to readily separate 'adult' and 'mainstream' movies into two distinct categories compared with other countries.⁵ (Incidentally, it appears that quite a number of the Roman Porno films produced by Nikkatsu studios played the Philippines during the '70s and '80s, and were highly influential. Certainly one can detect shades of Noboru Tanaka's *Watcher in the Attic* in Gallaga's film.)

Still, with video dominating the pornographic market, the continuing existence into the 21st Century of sex movies actually shot on 35mm film and projected in cinemas may be viewed as something of an anachronism, especially in a country that is often looked to as a technological trailblazer for the rest of the world. Even some Japanese industry outsiders find the phenomenon bemusing: Kenjiro Fujii's 2004 documentary *Pink Ribbon* expressed a measure of astonishment in an opening text title stating, "Even now porn theatres are a part of our cities."

It is fair to point out that diminishing returns have seen a huge thinning out of the industry since the '80s. While numerous companies have flourished producing these films over the years, at the beginning of the 21st Century five players dominated both production and distribution. The largest of these is OP Eiga (formerly Ôkura Eiga), founded by Mitsugu Ôkura,⁶ the former company president of the legendary Shintoho studios, after its collapse in 1961. To confuse matters, when the original Shintoho went bankrupt, its name was appropriated by Kôichi Gotô, a former staff member of its Kansai branch in Osaka, and the 'new' Shintoho became the second major pink distributor. As well as producing and distributing its own work, this company also theatrically distributes the films of Kokuei, the oldest pink production company, and the one whose films are the most widely circulated overseas. The fourth company, Xces (aka Shin Nihon Eizô, meaning 'New Japan Images') arose from the ashes of the major studio Nikkatsu after it ceased production of its more elaborately-mounted Roman Porno erotic features in 1988. Last, but by no means least, the Osaka-based ENK has earned itself a distinct position in the market by specialising in the production and distribution of gay pink films, an audience that is also catered for by OP Eiga.

Though falling into the category of Adult Films (*seijin eiga*) and thus carrying the restricted R-18 certificate, the pink film can have a lot more to offer besides the obvious attractions inherent in the sex movie. With the

main guideline being to deliver a set number of sex or nude scenes within a running time that became standardised during the '70s to roughly an hour, they can offer their makers the liberty to explore ideas, themes and stylistic avenues cut off from higher-budgeted mainstream productions. Titillation may indeed be the primary purpose, but other important aspects such as performances, story and technical qualities are given a surprising amount of emphasis.

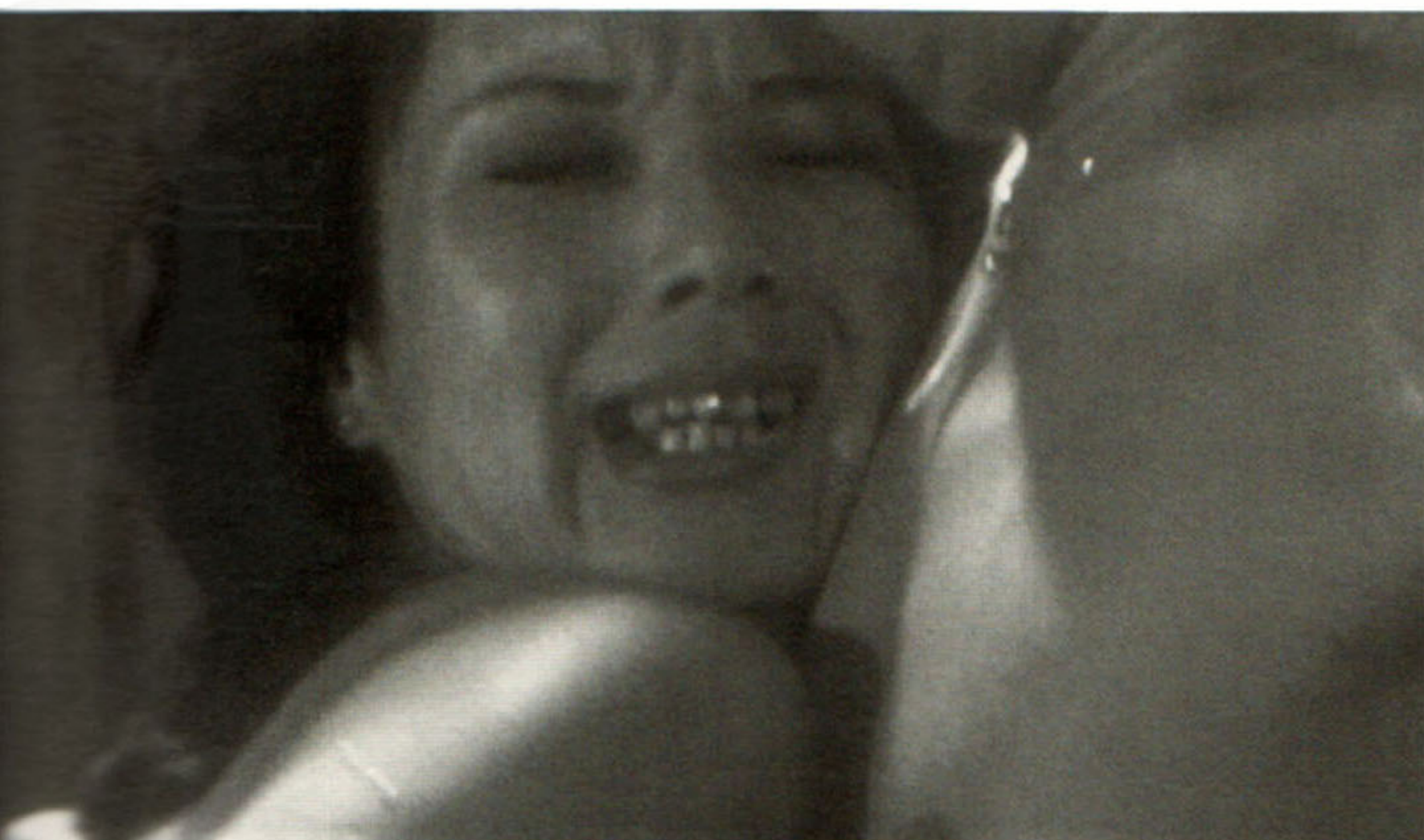
With their content encompassing the kinky, the comic, the grotesque and the downright bizarre, pink films have an immediate ability to capture the attention of the casual viewer and strike a wide range of emotional keys. Many of the standout works that will be considered in this book barely seem to conform to standard notions of erotic cinema at all. The abrasive, politically-charged films of Kôji Wakamatsu, for example, have been touted in Noël Burch's seminal academic analysis of Japanese film aesthetics, *To the Distant Observer*, as belonging firmly within the dynamic avant-garde scene of the '60s,⁷ while Takahisa Zeze's *Raigyo* (1997), with its obscure plot mechanics and one of the most brutal knife murders ever committed to celluloid, hardly seems the stuff wet dreams are made of.

As program pictures primarily targeted at an audience whose expectations are generally low, they remain virtually critic-proof. That is to say that mainstream reviewers tend to ignore them and their titles are excluded from listings magazines. Indeed, in recent years newspapers have barred advertisements for pink films. This was not always the case: respectable local critics like Sadao Yamane and Ken Terawaki⁸ wrote often about pink films (and even more so on Roman Porno), and the prominent listings magazine *Pia* even used to boast a small *seijin eiga* section during a short period in the early '90s when the genre became moderately trendy. But to the general public nowadays, these films are to all intents and purposes invisible. However, to a small selection of more intrepid movie buffs willing to explore the lower depths of domestic film culture, they have been seen to represent the indie scene at its most fiercely independent.

Though their manner of exhibition might cut off individual works from consideration by scholars and critics, the way in which the pink film dovetails within the overall structure of the domestic industry should not be ignored. At its best, the genre represents a vital hotbed of creative energy seemingly unfettered by minuscule budgets and gruelling shooting schedules. For filmmakers working on the peripheries of an industry that receives little government support, pink filmmaking can provide a crucial training ground for their staff before they go on to work on larger, more commercial, productions and the career path from assistant to the director's chair is far more direct than in many other filmmaking environments.

And what of those behind the scenes constructing these lusty fantasies? Most are university graduates, a crucial requirement for anyone wishing to enter the film industry in Japan, and all are linked by the belief that if filmmaking is to be one's chosen profession, then sex movies are as good a starting point as any other. Just ask directors such as Shinji Aoyama, Ryûichi Hiroki, Masahiro Kobayashi, Nobuhiro Suwa and Kazuo Hara, all of whom cut their teeth serving in various capacities within the pink industry before going on to pick up accolades internationally for their more conventional filmmaking workouts. Then there's Masayuki Suô, who made his debut in 1984 with *Abnormal Family: Older Brother's Bride*, a bawdy pastiche of the work of Japan's most revered director, Yasujirô Ozu. Years later, Suô's comic ballroom drama *Shall We Dance?* (1996) became the top-grossing Asian film ever to be released in the US, before being knocked off its perch by the phenomenal success of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000) and suffering the indignity of an insipid Hollywood remake starring Richard Gere and Jennifer Lopez. Yôjirô Takita, the helmsman behind the high-profile releases *When the Last Sword Is Drawn* (2003) and *Ashura* (2005) also served out his apprenticeship making pink films. During the '80s he contributed some of the most spirited and debauched romps the genre has ever seen, with the decidedly non-politically correct *Molester Train* series.

Other directors have taken more intriguing career paths. Shinya Yamamoto, one of *pinku eiga*'s early pioneers, took an upwards step into the limelight during the '90s as the genial co-presenter of the late-night TV show *Tonight*, whisking his viewers on nocturnal tours around the fleshpots of Tokyo. On the other side of the spectrum is Masao Adachi, for whom a relatively short spell making films with titles like *Sex Zone* (1968) and *Sex Play* (1969) served as a stepping stone between a couple of highly-regarded experimental works made while still at university and a period of self-imposed exile in the Middle East mingling with members of the People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Japanese Red Army (the JRA, or Nihon Sekigun).



above: Up close and personal in Shinya Yamamoto's *Molester Night Train* (1977). ©Shintoho



above: A typical shot from the *Molester Train* series, in this case Akira Fukamachi's *Molester Train: Flagrant Mischief Maker* (1994). ©Shintoho

This view of the pink industry as a highly independent breeding ground and bastion for auteurs must, however, come with some provisos. It is worth stating straight away that the individual works do vary wildly in their scope and ambition. The vast majority deliver little more than what they promise, their interest limited solely to the lengthy fleshy interludes that remain central to their appeal, with only the most tenuous of narratives to link them. Take, for example, *Pantyless Tour Conductor: I Want to Handle You* (2004), a typical work from the ultra-prolific Sakae Nitta, and distributed by Xces Film, in which our eponymous Tokyo tour guide livens up her jaunts around the city by exposing her peachy rear whenever local sites such as the Ginza Kabuki Theatre or the Meiji Shrine fail to keep the sightseers in her trust suitably awestruck. Nitta made several films in this *nôpan* (or 'pantyless') series the very same year, including *Moistening Housewife: Pantyless Apron*, which revolves around the various pairings of a group of four who meet for cooking lessons in each other's houses over a series of weekday lunchtimes, during which they exchange both recipes and bodily fluids. The film features a revolting scene, inspired by Jûzô Itami's cult comedy *Tampopo* (1985), in which two of the characters pass a slimy raw egg between their mouths as a prelude to their grappling on the kitchen table. The live-in private teacher at the heart of *Punishing Home Tutor: Pantyless One-to-One Lessons* metes out punishments to the horny high-schooler with whom she is entrusted to help pass his university entrance exams by plucking out his pubic hair, offering more enticing forms of encouragement for his successes in equal measure.

Prior to the term *pinku eiga* taking hold, the films were referred to by the monikers of *erodakushon eiga* or *eroduction* (a contraction of the words 'erotic' and 'production'), *oiroke eiga* ('sexy films') and *sanbyakuman eiga* ('three-million-yen films') due to their shoestring budgets, which it is claimed have remained around the



above: Exterior of a typical pink *eiga-kan* in Shinjuku, Tokyo. Upstairs, the Kokusai Gekijō ('International Theatre') plays the films of Xces, while the downstairs *Kokusai Meiga-za* ('International Masterpiece Theatre') plays the films of Shintoho and Kokuei. (pictures by author)
opposite: The lower depths: entrances to two of Tokyo's premier adult theatres. (pictures by Jason Gray)

same mark since the humble beginnings of the genre. The average pink film costs ¥3.5 million (roughly \$35,000) to produce, though over the years films have found themselves made on both considerably more and less than this rough ballpark figure. This modest sum bought a lot more in the '60s than it does nowadays. These days, three to four-day location shoots are the norm, with their makers often adopting guerrilla tactics in the absence of official filming permits. This mode of production finds its most remarkable application in the long-running *Molester Train* series, which takes its action onto the crowded Tokyo commuter train network.

The no-frills style of the modern pink, marked by a prevalence of long, static takes from a fixed camera position, with a minimum of inserts, close-ups or cutaways, is probably best attributed to these breakneck shooting schedules, rather than any adherence to what is often taken to be the 'Japanese aesthetic'. As the director must make do on around six or seven rolls of film, retakes are kept to a bare minimum. Due to the noise created by the Arriflex camera, sound is recorded and dubbed in post-production, with the assorted slurps, squelches, moans, sighs, cries and whimpers amplified to lend a slightly ludicrous air to the onscreen antics. There's a memorable scene in *Pink Ribbon* of the actors 'performing' their sex scenes in Yotsuya's Cine Cabin recording studios, the favoured choice among pink production companies, while standing fully clothed wearing headphones and with scripts in hand like the various assorted rock stars in the original Band Aid 'Do They Know It's Christmas?' video.

It's an obvious truism that pink films are erotic films. However, it doesn't necessarily follow that all erotic films

produced in Japan can be classified as pink. The term is often misused by foreign observers to include any film that features an abundance of sex or nudity, but in its strictest sense, the genre is defined by its means of production and distribution rather than its content. Other independent productions, such as those produced by the Art Theatre Guild in the '60s, like *Nanami: Inferno of First Love* (1968), or art films such as *Onibaba* (1964) and *Woman in the Dunes* (1964), may have rivalled pink film in terms of the amount of bare flesh on display and thus originally found themselves playing the same overseas venues (*Variety* described *Onibaba* as "the most nude, sexiest pic to be unveiled in New York so far"⁹ when it reached American shores in 1965), but they were produced and screened in notably different circumstances.

By definition, pink also excludes the work of the major studios, from the groundbreaking early insinuation of sex and savagery into the mainstream in Seijun Suzuki's *Gate of Flesh* (1964) through the *ero-guro* horrors of Yasuzô Masumura's *Blind Beast* (1968) all the way to Toshiharu Ikeda's glossy adaptation of Junichirô Tanizaki's *The Key* (1997) – often cited as the first mainstream Japanese movie to sport a full-frontal view of its leading lady (Naomi Kawashima) *à poil*. The majors did react to the increased demand for more sexually explicit adult fare during the late '60s and '70s. For example, at the beginning of the new decade, Toei introduced its own range of sexploitation pictures, retroactively referred to as Pinky Violence, while Shochiku distributed the works of a company named Tōkatsu. Though such works essentially fall outside of the scope of this book, they shall be covered in passing to help contextualise developments within the pink industry.



However, we shall be considering in some depth the influence of the company Nikkatsu and their Roman Porno line which the company initiated in 1971. Though not technically pink, Roman Porno drew heavily upon the genre for inspiration, and throughout its 17-year run at box offices across Japan, it established something of a symbiotic relationship with the pink industry, circulating many of these independently-produced works as supporting pictures for the main feature, and poaching heavily from the pink film's pool of performing talent.

Nagisa Ôshima's *In the Realm of the Senses* was perhaps the most infamous and widely-seen work by a Japanese director ever to blur the boundaries between art and pornography. As a French production that only initially screened in Japan in a heavily censored version, Ôshima's film is another that can't be described as belonging to the pink genre, but it was co-produced on the Japanese side by one of the major players in the field, Kôji Wakamatsu, and also raises interesting points about the nature of censorship in Japan. As such, it will be discussed in a later chapter.

And we can exclude from our definition the vast straight-to-video market, comprised of both erotic V-cinema productions shot on film but distributed exclusively for home viewing – typified by the two *Weather Woman* titles produced by Bandai Visual and directed by Tomoaki Hosoyama in the mid-'90s (the first was later reissued theatrically, though not to pink cinemas) – and the prolific output of the Total Media Corporation (TMC), who have circulated a number of the kitschy girl wrestling jamborees of Takao Nakano, one of the few directors from this field to make any sort of overseas name for himself.

Finally, there's the lucrative industry based on the production of hardcore pornography that has been around since the '80s, known as Adult Video (*adaruto bideo*) or by the more commonplace shorthand of AV.

Though many a pink director has dabbled in both areas for extra pocket money, they see their work in this medium as something completely distinct from the self-sustaining world in which they usually ply their trade.

It is worth looking a little more closely at pink *vis-à-vis* AV. Adults Only cinemas are a rare sight in Western cities nowadays, but in Japan a ticket costing around ¥1800 (approximately \$15) will gain the viewer access to a rolling program of three films that change on a weekly basis, each of which runs for about an hour. Prominent posters and hoardings displayed outside the theatres, featuring such tempting titles as *Molester Train Married Woman Edition: Wife Is a Pervert*, *Family Gets Rude Chapter 1: Perverts' Fun* and *Beautiful Stewardess: Don't Get Your Uniform Dirty*, herald the haven of earthy entertainments they harbour within. But compared with the levels of explicitness that Western viewers have become accustomed to in pornography, their content seems subdued, almost coy.



above: Backseat education: Akira Fukamachi's *New Widow's Lodgings: Open Inside and Out* (1988). ©Shintoho



above: A scene from Rei Sakamoto's *21st Century Girl* (2001) showing Rina Sasahara, with *maebari* clearly visible, beneath Yôta Kawase. ©Kokuei/Shintohe
opposite bottom left: DVD cover art for a typical AV production, a different world entirely.

For decades filmmakers have found themselves restrained by the relatively rigid censorship laws of the Commission for the Administration of the Motion Picture Code of Ethics, better known as Eirin.¹⁰ Until relatively recently, nary a strand of pubic hair was permitted to reach the eyes of the Japanese public, with the offending areas airbrushed from imported magazines (a practice prevalent in Britain in the '50s and '60s)¹¹ or buried beneath a myopic sea of fog (*bokashi*) in films and on video, regardless of the context in which they appear. This led to the employment of an ingenious triangular construction of skin-coloured adhesive tape known as the *maebari* (literally 'hanging in front') within the world of erotic film production. The situation eased off around the mid-'90s, though to the outsider the guidelines about exactly what can and cannot be shown may still seem as vague as ever.

Of course, Eirin is not only on the lookout for sexual material. Scenes of extreme violence, drug abuse, or material which causes offence or disgrace to the nation also fall under its watchful gaze, and in preventing them from reaching the Japanese public, Eirin is abetted by other institutions; namely Customs, who have the

power to stop such material from making it into the country in the first place, and the police, whose role is to uphold public order and make sure no obscenity laws are broken. It should also be pointed out that though the Eirin seal of approval is necessary for general theatrical releases, there are venues that fall outside its remit where non-rated material can be screened, such as Image Forum (specialising in experimental films), and non-commercial exhibition spaces, public halls etc. (the use of such places is especially common in the world of documentary films). In 2005, producer Genjirô Arato circumvented the censors by screening Tatsushi Ômori's *Whispering of the Gods* – whose scenes of sexual abuse within a remote Christian farming community were originally deemed too strong to make it through intact – in a purpose-built theatre on the compound of the Tokyo National Museum in Ueno (although the film was later submitted to and passed by Eirin to screen in more conventional venues.)

In matters of sexuality, the issue is not pubic hair in itself, but what it signifies, which under Article 175 of the Japanese Criminal Code relating to the Public Hygiene Law (*Kôshû eisei-hô*), is 'obscenity' (*waisetsu*). This

essentially means no *explicit* depictions of genitalia, or sexual intercourse. It matters not what the activity happening in front of the camera actually is, but merely whether it is *overtly* shown to be happening. Because of this, it is perhaps misleading to distinguish pink films and AV as belonging respectively to the separate spheres of softcore and hardcore pornography. Essentially, softcore pornography is defined as depictions of simulated sex, while hardcore is the depiction of authentic sexual activity. The fuzzy area in this split, however, rests not so much on what is actually happening, but how it is presented. There is no doubt that unsimulated sex does occur in pink films, even if there doesn't seem any pressing need for it in terms of what goes up on screen: director Shinji Imaoka insisted on his actors actually 'doing it' for his 2004 production *Lunch Box*, even though most of the activity occurred off-frame or under blankets. Furthermore, the use of digital mosaics (*mosaiku*) occluding the action in AV means that, though authentic scenes of intercourse do take place (referred to in Japanese as *honban* – the 'real thing'), often in leering close-up, its depiction cannot truthfully be described as explicit. Though I shall characterise pink as softcore and AV as hardcore within these pages, the usage of the terms should be understood with this borne in mind.

Ironically, what has been considered by many foreign commentators to be something of an idiosyncrasy in the country's censorship laws – namely that as long as this basic definition of *waisetsu* is adhered to, seemingly anything else goes – has played its own part in ensuring the continued survival of the pink film. Like similar products across the globe, the technical quality and production values of most AV films (though not all) remain low, with the content of the films often stripped down to their mere fundamentals of a girl and a camcorder. Sex is everything, as the camera plunges

unabashedly into the nooks and crannies of its subject matter. Though limited by similar constraints as its celluloid counterparts in what it can portray, these video releases fall under the eyes of a separate industry watchdog, the *Nihon Ethics of Video Association*, also known as NEVA or *bide-rin*. If anything, *bide-rin* is a little stricter than Eirin. In many instances in the videos of pink films released in the '80s and '90s for example, it is clear that the *bokashi* has been superimposed over the offending areas especially for the home viewing market.

If the sheer prevalence of AV is anything to go by, most of its viewers don't seem unduly concerned that its graphic depictions of male and female genitalia remain obscured by the ubiquitous digital mosaic. What most AV films offer is unsimulated *honban* sex at its most raw, or *nama*, totally devoid of the window dressing of narrative, technical artistry and performance that has proven so important to the pink film.

Rather than snuff out its cinematic antecedent entirely, as initially predicted, the arrival of AV has seen pink directors – most notably the generation represented by a quartet known as the Four Devils – pushing the genre in entirely new directions as they channel their efforts into giving viewers something that neither hardcore video nor mainstream commercial cinema can provide. Clearly the pink film fulfils a rather different need from merely showing as much as possible. One of the most interesting aspects of pink films is that, while they can be broadly categorised under the catchall banner of 'sex films', the sexual content itself is only a small part of many of these films' *raison d'être*. Even though Eirin now allows full frontal female nudity to be portrayed onscreen, few of the genre's practitioners working today opt to go down this road. (Rather hypocritically, though male sexual organs have yet to play any part in Japanese erotic films, Eirin has passed by their images un-blurred in foreign arthouse films such as Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Dreamers* and Gaspar Noé's *Irréversible*, released locally as *Alex (Arekksu)* after the name of its central character.)

Nevertheless, competition from AV and the increased working hours of the post-bubble economy has seen pink's theatrical venues robbed of many of its original patrons. Though production remains at a high level, the market is now a pale shadow of its heyday in the early '80s. Nowadays the five companies share a meagre dozen such outlets between them in Tokyo, though most of Japan's larger cities boast their own adult cinema.

Retroactively charting a chronological history through so vast and nebulous a field as Japanese erotic cinema is an exercise fraught with difficulties. Even taking the time to survey a mere scattering of representative works is a Sisyphean task. Nikkatsu alone produced around 850 Roman Porno titles, and only a fraction of them are readily available on video. When it





above: Kaoru Akitsu in *Family Gets Rude Chapter 2: Unequalled Limits*. ©Shinto

opposite: Blushing bride Reiko Yamaguchi gets intimate with her in-laws in Yutaka Ikejima's *Family Gets Rude Chapter 2: Unequalled Limits* (2004). ©Shinto

comes to pink, you are considering in excess of five thousand films released in a period of more than forty years. Of these, one can use one's fingers to count those available in subtitled versions overseas, from companies such as Screen Edge and Salvation, but even in Japan the selection is not much better.

There is a domestic market for the rental of pink films on video, but it is a small one. Video store owners who place these milder, more stylised, films in the discreet back section reserved for AV find few customers willing to rent them out a second time, after they've been left feeling distinctly short-changed by the misleadingly graphic images that often grace their covers. With so few modern releases making it to video, until recently – with the emergence of internet Video on Demand services such as those provided on the company's own websites, or those of third party distributors like DMM – the only real way to get a proper snapshot of the current state of industry was by watching the films *in situ* in the actual pink cinemas.

As for the older films, companies such as Uplink Factory have made a number of the recognised

masterpieces of the genre (both *pinku eiga* and Roman Porno) available to the sell-through market as part of their Nippon Erotics series of DVD releases, some of which can be found tucked alongside works by other, more reputable, auteur directors on the shelves of rental chains such as Tsutaya.¹² But aside from the films of Kôji Wakamatsu, the first two decades in which the pink film proliferated are particularly poorly served.

All of this raises the question of how representative these available titles actually are. From day one, the films were only issued in a limited number of prints that circulated theatres around the country until they wore out (tragically for scholars of Japanese film, this seems to be the case of many productions from the past, and not only those made by the smaller independent studios, but the majors also). Put simply, the early *eroductions* were simply not made to be kept for posterity and viewed decades after their original runs. Often produced by small fly-by-night companies in operation for only a short number of years, many older titles can be considered forever lost, the negatives junked by their production companies long ago.



There are probably, however, many films out there from this period still existing, uncatalogued or in the hands of private collectors. The recent Uplink releases of two of Mamoru Watanabe's works from 1970, *Secret Hot Spring Town: Nightly Starfish* and *Women Hell Song: Shakuhashi Benten*, were only made possible because their director, who originally produced the films through his own company, Kantô Eihai, had kept his own personal 16mm prints of the films. No such luck for his 1965 debut *Hussy*, which like so many early works has been lost to the ravages of time. But all of this means that the reader should be wary of those reference books that purport to offer in-depth critiques of these *maboroshi* (phantom) films from the early days.

All is not entirely lost. The company Shintohe provides an interesting case, because it keeps prints of all its films produced within the past 10-15 years on its office premises, reissuing them with different titles to meet the hungry demands of rapidly-changing theatre schedules. Due to a lack of storage space, the company routinely donates large batches of these older titles to the country's National Film Archive, though at the time of writing many have yet to be catalogued. In other cases, even though the existence of the originally

circulated prints can no longer be accounted for, the negatives do still exist, held in the laboratories where they were processed. However, the sheer cost involved in striking up new prints makes this option financially untenable, as ultimately the market for these films on DVD or internet download is just not big enough to justify the effort, and it would take the attentions of a cinéophile with the means of Martin Scorsese and the tastes of Quentin Tarantino before any are ever likely to see the flickering light of a projector again. In other words, it's simply not going to happen.

There is another factor that influences the availability of many of the titles produced in the '70s: namely their rather liberal use of popular music from the era. The Japanese Society for the Rights of Authors, Composers and Publishers (JASRAC) is extremely vigilant, and while films released within the underground ghetto of the pink theatrical network several decades ago might have slipped past its notice, it is doubtful whether a widescale re-release nowadays would.

Even getting a snapshot of the pink scene over the past few years has presented obstacles. Of the films produced by the major pink companies that dominate the scene today, the ones that make their way out of



above: Outside Tokyo's Cine Roman Ikebukuro. (picture by Jason Gray)

the *pinku eiga* theatre network are predominantly owned by just one company: Kokuei. The only company that prepares subtitled prints for festival screenings and actively pursues foreign markets, Kokuei has been active in its attempts at courting a new wave of viewers who wouldn't be seen dead in such unsavoury places, through retrospectives and special screenings under toned-down, less salacious titles in Tokyo's plush arthouse theatres (venues such as Eurospace, the Athenée Français or the Higashi Nakano Pole-Pole cinema).

Both Kokuei and its close brethren at Shintohe have been considerably more open and willing to share information than the other studios, and hence it is their work that shall dominate the pages of this book, just as it did in Kenjiro Fujii's documentary exposé, *Pink Ribbon*. Kokuei's role in shaping perceptions of what the pink genre is, not only overseas, but also for casual viewers within Japan, is significant, but as we shall see, its films are largely atypical of the genre. In fact, they are often highly unpopular with regular pink patrons and the theatre owners who book the films, especially those outside Tokyo. Nevertheless, it is the directors nurtured by this company – names such as Takahisa Zeze, Toshiki Satô, Shinji Imaoka and Mitsuru Meike – who are looked

upon by outsiders as standard-bearers for the industry, even if within the pink film's own enclave their work is seen as something altogether different.

The narrative that shall emerge over the course of these pages is therefore primarily dominated by the voices of those still alive or working in the business who I have been lucky enough to talk to and those whose work I've been able to see. I hope it will present a sufficiently full picture of the depth and breadth of the pink film world, as well as highlighting some of the complexities in attempting to draw too many conclusions about its nature. Travelling from the abrasive highly-politicised work of left-wing ultra-radicals during the tumult of the '60s, through the rougher, rawer misogynist fantasies of the Bubble Years of the '80s, into the period of increased reflexivity and soul-searching that marked the turn of the millennium, there's plenty of interest to be discovered in the world behind the pink curtain. And even beyond the account given within these pages, no doubt there are further tales to be told.

Footnotes

¹ For the curious, the films described are Masao Adachi's *High School Girl Guerrilla* (1969), any one of Yôjirô Takita's *Molester Train* films (from the mid-'80s), Hisayasu Satô's *The Secret Garden* (1987), Daisuke Gotô's *A Cow at Daybreak* (2003) and Mitsuru Meike's *The Glamorous Life of Sachiko Hanai* (2004).

² See Richie's introduction to Bock, Audie. *Japanese Film Directors* (New York: Kodansha, 1990 reprint): 9.

³ See Uplink's homepage for the *Pink Ribbon* documentary: www.uplink.co.jp/pinkribbon/bangai.html.

⁴ The organisation Unijapan gives statistics on the number of films released in Japan, both on its website and in its yearly catalogues, while details about the pink films released since 2000 are listed on the PG website. The number of films categorised as R-18 *seijin eiga*, most of which are pink films, is also listed on the homepage of the censorship board Eirin. In 2000 this was 111; in 2001, 103; in 2002, 97; in 2003, 94; in 2004, 82; and in 2005, 85. If these figures differ from the number of titles listed on the PG website, this is because Eirin's term starts in April and ends in March of each year.

⁵ The Filipino sex film is a subject which clearly requires a good deal more research. For now, the very best introduction to the subject is the chapter 'Shoe Queen of Blood Island' in Tombs, Pete. *Mondo Macabro: Weird & Wonderful Cinema Around the World*. (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1998).

⁶ Some sources cite the reading of Ôkura's first name as Mitsugi.

⁷ Burch, Noël. *To the Distant Observer: Form and Meaning in the Japanese Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California, 1979): 351-54.

⁸ Yamane's numerous writings about cinema include books on Kinji Fukasaku and the *jidai-geki* actor Raizô Ichikawa, while Terawaki is the former General Director of Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs (Bunkachô).

⁹ Cited in Hardy, Phil (ed.). *The Aurum Encyclopedia of Horror* (London: Aurum Press, reprint 1996): 165. Note that I have not been able to trace the original source of the quote, but it does not appear in *Variety's* original review of *Onibaba*.

¹⁰ The English pages of Eirin's website give the awkward translation from the Japanese of the 'Administration Commission of Motion Picture Code of Ethics'.

¹¹ McGillivray, David. *Doing Rude Things: The History of the British Sex Film 1957-1981*. (London: Sun Tavern Fields, 1992).

¹² Tsutaya's flagship branches in Shinjuku and Shibuya provide a perfect place for those who live in Tokyo to start exploring any aspect of Japanese cinema.

Sex, Censorship and Other Positions of Power: New Ways of Looking

The willingness to immerse oneself in a larger-than-life simulacrum, where editing condenses moments in time, and sensations are intensified through close ups, sound, colour and lighting – this is the essence of cinema's appeal. Cinema is also, as Jean-Luc Godard once famously stated, "boys photographing girls", a theme taken up by Laura Mulvey in her highly influential 1975 essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*.¹³ The sex film hones these elements to perfection.

The veneration of the female form might well have belonged to an older artistic tradition stretching back to the dawn of civilisation, but once the images started moving, issues as to what exactly was suitable for representation began to dominate 20th Century discourse. From day one, filmmakers in every movie-producing nation found themselves locked in a continuous battle with authoritarian censorship bodies so as to validate the content of their work.

On 28 December, 1895, at the Grand Café in Paris, the Lumière brothers, Auguste and Louis, unveiled their Cinematograph machine, one of the first devices capable of projecting life-size images captured from reality onto a large screen where, unlike Edison's earlier peepshow device the Kinetoscope, they could be viewed by more than one person at a time.¹⁴ Not two years later, several films sold for distribution in Britain by a character named Philipp Wolff were barred from public exhibition. Quite how explicit they were we shall never know, as, like so much of the output of cinema's first two decades, nothing remains bar the titles. But these in themselves – *The Temptation of St. Anthony*, *The Artist's Model*, *A Bride Unrobing* and *A French Lady's Bath* – give a pretty good indication that even within these first few years exhibitors were not shy of drawing upon female nudity (or at least its promise) to bring in the crowds. Many of these early 'artistic' nudies were styled along the Neo-Classical traditions of late-Victorian high art, such as the paintings of Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Sir Frederic Leighton and Albert Moore, whose exotic classical settings and referencing of the sculpture and mythology of the Antiquity lent their works a certain respectable cachet.¹⁵

Moral outrage greeted the arrival in Britain of the new unknown medium of cinema and its 'obscene pictures', initially – at the end of the nineteenth century – via the hand-cranked Mutoscope or the 'What the Butler Saw' machines in travelling fairgrounds, amusement arcades and pleasure pier

funfairs. Before the establishment of permanent cinemas, when these sideshow attractions represented the primary outlets for films, exhibition licences were needed for neither projected pictures nor penny-in-the-slot peepshows. Soon enough, the deafening clamour of the chattering classes and the clergy forced the government to react by bringing in the Cinematograph Act of 1909.¹⁶ Ostensibly this was for safety reasons: early film stock was very volatile and projection equipment had an unpredictable habit of bursting into flame, in several prominent cases taking theatrical venues with it. The British Board of Film Censors (BBFC) began its activities in earnest later in 1913, with its two central edicts being no nudity and no depictions of Christ.¹⁷

At any rate, there must have been something about the celebrated British reserve that kept these 'smoking-room subjects' from dominating the early market, as very few were ever produced in the country, and if they were, the police turned a blind eye, because they would only ever have been exhibited privately, behind closed doors. The French were considerably more liberal about what passed as permissible topics, with titles such as *Eastern Slave Market* and *Borgia Amuses Herself* listed among scores of others in the 1905 Pathé catalogue.

Across the world, nudity was swiftly shorn from mainstream productions in order to maximise potential for international distribution between territories whose laws and mores differed widely. Giuseppe de Liguoro's 1911 adaptation of Dante's *L'inferno*, the first Italian feature film and the most expensive ever produced at the time, was either shown cut, or banned outright in several countries, due to its classically-inspired displays of male nakedness. Hedy Lamarr's famous bathing scene in the 1933 Czech film *Ecstasy* was pruned for its UK release, while a silent retelling of the life of *Casanova* from 1927, directed by Alexandre Volkoff, was banned entirely by the BBFC due to its boudoir scenes. Soon the arrival of the talkies made snipping the offending moments problematic, due to the new problem of needing to re-synchronise the soundtrack. However, with the introduction of the Hays Code by the industry-sponsored Motion Picture Producers Association, American cinema, which soon came to prevail throughout cinemas across much of the globe and especially in English language speaking countries, became ever more morally unimpeachable as the decades progressed. Nevertheless, one has only to

look to some of the titles produced by the Ufa studios in Germany to see that some countries were more tolerant than others: bare breasts were clearly visible in the erotic nightclub dance sequence in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1926), while the various callisthenic and athletic sequences of the *Kulturfilm* documentary *Ways to Health and Beauty* (1925) celebrated the body beautiful in all its naked splendour (this film was actually released in Japan around this time, though with all the nudity cut out). After several decades the nudist camp genre, initiated by the US-produced *Garden of Eden* (1954), reintroduced bare bodies to conventional cinema screens in Britain and America and inspired further titles like *Nudist Paradise* (1958), *Naked As Nature Intended* (1961), *My Bare Lady* (1962), *World Without Shame* (1962) and *Eves on Skis* (1963), all of which similarly sported athletic but markedly asexual images of naked bodies in motion. Unlike the original German film, however, they made creative use of props such as beach balls and picnic baskets to ensure that the genital areas remained strictly obscured; a quaint mannerism that would find itself replicated in Japanese erotic films.

Though the decades running up to the nudie revolution of the '50s had ostensibly seen female flesh banished from Western screens, significantly this was only white flesh. (As we shall see in the next chapter,

such double standards were hardly unique to Britain or America.) The makers of travelogues and ethnological studies were not quite so reticent when it came to depicting topless tribal women, and one can't discount the fact that many viewers must have been drawn to these images by more basic instincts, even if it can be argued that the filmmakers possessed only the noblest of intentions. In any case, many clearly did not. To name but one example, the native bearers clad in nothing but loincloths who accompany the two explorers searching for the abandoned city of Ankhor Wat in a re-constructed documentary account of a 1912 expedition through Cambodia, released in 1935 as *Forbidden Adventure* by US exploitation pioneer Dwain Esper, were allegedly recruited from a Los Angeles whorehouse, and were clearly of African, rather than Asian descent (this nudity was passed uncut by the BBFC upon the film's UK release as *Beyond Shanghai*, even though the film was substantially re-edited in many other ways, including the incorporation of a new narration track in the Queen's English). Scenes of beautiful Polynesian girls performing sinuous, shimmying dances in native dress (or rather, undress) provided one of the many attractions of Friedrich W. Murnau and Robert Flaherty's Tahitian-set drama *Tabu*, a generously-budgeted US production that enjoyed a significant amount of attention from press and public alike when it was released in 1931. Evidently few at the time considered that such scenes of local colour might have had a more titillatory motive. After all, "Miscegenation, sex-relationship[s] between the black and white races" was a possibility denied by the Hays Office.¹⁸

On the other side of the world, things had taken a rather different course. Given its reputation for sex and violence nowadays, it might come as a surprise to learn that prior to the 1950s, Japanese cinema was notably chaste. In fact, women didn't appear onscreen at all for the first two decades, a convention carried on from the traditional theatrical forms of Kabuki and Noh, of which straightforward adaptations formed the raw material for much of Japan's early cinema; women's roles were instead taken by specialised male actors known as *oyama* (the same Japanese characters, meaning literally 'woman style', can also be read to give their alternative name, *onnagata*) in makeup and costume.

The early movie market in Japan was surprisingly cosmopolitan. During the 1910s many of the films released were imported titles from Europe and, following the establishment of Universal's office in Tokyo in 1916, also America. In this environment, early moral guardians, as in the West, seemed to have been mainly preoccupied with the pernicious effect these flickering pictures might have on impressionable children.¹⁹ Victorin-Hippolyte Jasset's *Zigomar*, a French serial whose instalments were released in



above: Traditional notions of beauty, as emblemized by one of Japan's first female stars of the silver screen, Haruko Sawamura.

France between 1911-13, provided one particular early cause for concern.²⁰ Meanwhile, within the country fiercer critics were at work on its cinema's more conservative adherence to prior theatrical standards. Film magazines at the time came laden with decorous images of Western starlets, who clearly provided a major draw for foreign films over local ones. But where were the local equivalents of Mary Pickford, Lillian Gish or Pearl White? The industry finally reacted by replacing the *oyama* with authentic members of the fairer sex, including: Haruko Sawamura, whose appearance in Minoru Murata's *Souls on the Road*, released 8 April, 1921, was but one of the film's many innovations; Yaeko Mizutani, who graced Nikkatsu's *Winter Camellia* (directed by Ryôha Hatanaka and released 24 April, 1921); and Sumiko Kurishima, who starred in two films by Henry Kotani released by Shochiku a week apart from one another, with *The Poppy* coming out on 29 April, 1921 and *An Electrician and His Wife* on 6 May.²¹ The latter was apparently banned almost immediately for being "too sexy,"²² though with the film long since lost it is difficult to say for sure exactly what the censors took umbrage at.

By any measure, these early female stars of the silver screen had a limited shelf life, as their cherished traditional and virginal demeanour soon found itself losing ground to the more threatening Western-inspired figure of the *môga* ('modern girl') as the decade progressed. Exchanging her kimono for a flapper dress, the *môga* modelled herself on American silent screen stars such as Mary Pickford and Clara Bow. She was accompanied by her male counterpart, the *môbo* ('modern boy'), who donned fedoras and spivvish tailor-made suits and skulked around any one of the plethora of jazz bars and Parisian-style cafés that had sprouted up seemingly overnight in Tokyo's chichi Ginza district. Japanese cinema began to increasingly reflect this new Modern Age. For example, in the *shomin-geki* works (films based on the lives of the lower-middle classes) filmed at Shochiku's Kamata studios during the '20s and '30s, filmmakers such as Yasujiro Ozu, Hiroshi Shimizu and Heinosuke Gosho looked heavily to Hollywood for inspiration, not only borrowing their films' plots²³ but also appropriating Western fashions and music and disseminating images of what 'modern life' should resemble to a new rising class of urban white-collar audiences.

Through cinema, newfangled foreign customs were adopted and *katakana*-ised foreign loan words began to infiltrate the common parlance, their usage considered chic and worldly-wise. By the end of the '30s the Western influence had reached critical mass. On 7 July, 1937, Japanese and Chinese forces clashed in the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, escalating a conflict with China that had already been in effect since 1932 and placing Japan in a directly antagonistic situation with those Western powers that had vested interests in



above: 1920s actress Sakuko Yanagi modelling the classic *môga* look, a more overtly Western form of glamour inspired by Hollywood starlets of the era.

Asia; namely Britain, America and Holland. The Film Law (*eiga-hô*) went into effect on 1 October, 1939, bringing the industry closer under state control by restricting the number of foreign films screened, enforcing the showing of newsreel films (*jiji eiga* or 'current events films') and 'culture film' documentaries (*bunka eiga*, inspired by the German *Kulturfilm*) intended to "contribute to the nourishment of the national spirit and national intelligence", and compelling the pre-censorship of all feature film scenarios to be produced within the country.²⁴ In 1940, the regulations became even tighter: "slice-of-life films, films describing individual happiness, films treating the lives of the rich, scenes of women smoking, drinking in cafés, etc., the use of foreign words, and films dealing with sexual frivolity are all prohibited."²⁵ Men and women had also been

forbidden from sharing the same seating areas in cinemas for some years before the Film Law was passed. Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor on 7 December, 1941, foreign influences were forcibly ejected not only from the screen but also from almost every aspect of Japanese life until the end of the war (although films produced by the Axis and neutral countries were still permitted). Alien concepts such as equality (either sexual or civil) and individualism, as well as any further kind of introspection, were banished in favour of a canonisation of feudal and aesthetic traditions, celebrations of both recent and historical military successes, and righteous justifications of Japan's stated goal of the liberation of Asia from its colonial oppressors.

Japan's defeat saw the country occupied for a seven-year period by the Allied forces. In reality the guiding hand of occupational policy was American, in the form of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP), General Douglas MacArthur. Aside from rewriting the country's constitution to include the famous Article 9, "the renunciation of war and all instruments thereof", with the stated ambition of turning Japan into "the Switzerland of Asia",²⁶ the occupation government's Civil Information and Education Service (CIE) instigated a system of preproduction censorship for all scripts and potential projects. As well as making sure that no Japanese film ever alluded to the occupier's presence (you'll seldom see American tanks or GIs in Japanese films made between 1946-52), the subjects banned were the ones promoted during the wartime regime; encouraged were the same three S's of 'Sex, Screens and Sport' that conservative nationalists had railed against in the '30s. Ironically, the producers or directors of films championing Western-style democracy during the occupation period were often the very same people who had glorified Japan's military expansion into Asia. On the other hand, with communism representing a new emerging threat to the American way of life, the occupation authorities also waged an internal war to purge all left-leaning figures from the Japanese industry; the very people who had originally opposed the nationalistic wartime government.

'Democratic' activities such as baseball were encouraged in films, and significantly so too were demonstrations of gender equality through more open displays of affection between the sexes. The first hurdle was the screen kiss. Kissing scenes had found themselves cut from imported foreign movies even before the war, "condemned as a symbol of Western decadence." It was not a Japanese custom, the argument went, and the kind of activity that was best conducted behind closed doors, if at all.²⁷ On 23 May, 1946, Daiei Studios released Yasuki Chiba's *A Certain Night's Kiss*, which bashfully shielded the pleasures promised by its title behind a raised umbrella. Had it

not, it would have been the first onscreen kiss ever witnessed in a Japanese film. Instead, that distinction went to a film released on exactly the same day, Yasushi Sasaki's *Twenty-Year-Old Youth*. According to the director, the kissing scene was included at the insistence of the CIE's David Conde, with the rationalisation that, "Japanese tend to do things sneakily. They should do things openly."

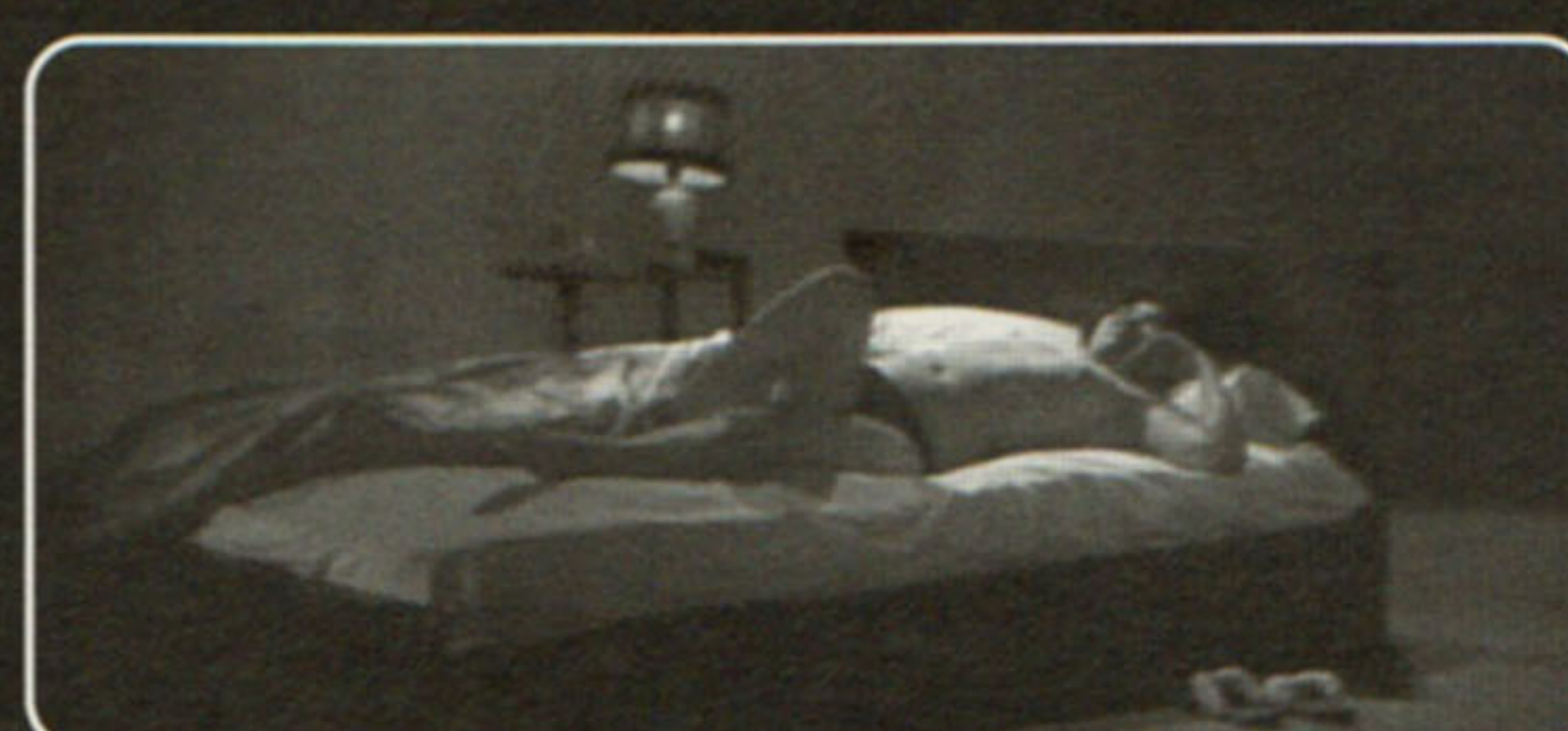
The national press was in uproar, as Donald Richie writes: "Was the kiss 'merely commercial' or was it 'artistically motivated'? Was it 'hygienic'? Did it have 'a sexual motive'? And, was it 'Japanese or not'?"²⁸ The films found themselves labelled 'kiss films' (*kisu eiga*), and it was not until Keisuke Kinoshita's *Phoenix* was released the following year that critics finally saw an onscreen smooch which was motivated by the plot rather than included as a talking point in itself. After the initial furore had subsided, the kiss became a normalised affair in Japanese film, if not quite as commonplace as in Western cinema. It would be some years, however, before clothes were shed and bare flesh was aired in a mainstream picture. Meanwhile, censorship over Japanese cinema soon passed from American hands to Eirin. Established in 1949 and comprised of figures from within the industry, the new body nonetheless modelled its regulations on the American Motion Picture Production Code.

Nudity and sex were still a no-no as far as fictional films went, but sexual subject matter was allowed to be broached in the scientific and educational documentaries that were referred to under a variety of names, including *seikyôiku eiga* ('sex education films'), *osan eiga* ('birth films'), *junketsu eiga* ('purity or chastity films') and *basukon eiga* ('birth-control films'). The majority of the early examples of this genre were imported from Germany from the 1920s onwards and were intended solely for the medical community, though in time they came to be made domestically as well.²⁹ Such films were originally permitted under the proviso that they were not shown in cinemas but in medical or scientific institutions, though there were cases when they were surreptitiously snuck out of this specialist circuit. Even in the early days, some of these were undoubtedly more sensationalist in their content and less noble in their aims. In the '50s there was some concern when a number of *basukon* titles, including *The True Nature of Beauty*, with its provocative marital condom scene, and *Abortion or Contraception*, slipped through the net to play outside of their intended venues, including some alluringly advertised screenings in conventional cinemas, where they drew curious audiences in their droves. Roland Domenig writes that, "In 1952 a cinema in Shibuya, for instance, presented a 'Sex education film festival' (*seikyôiku eiga taikai*). For an entrance fee of 100 yen the audience could watch four films: *Sei no Honno* (*Sex Instinct*), *Hana aru Dokuso* (*Poisonous Plant in Bloom*), *Ratai* (*Naked*

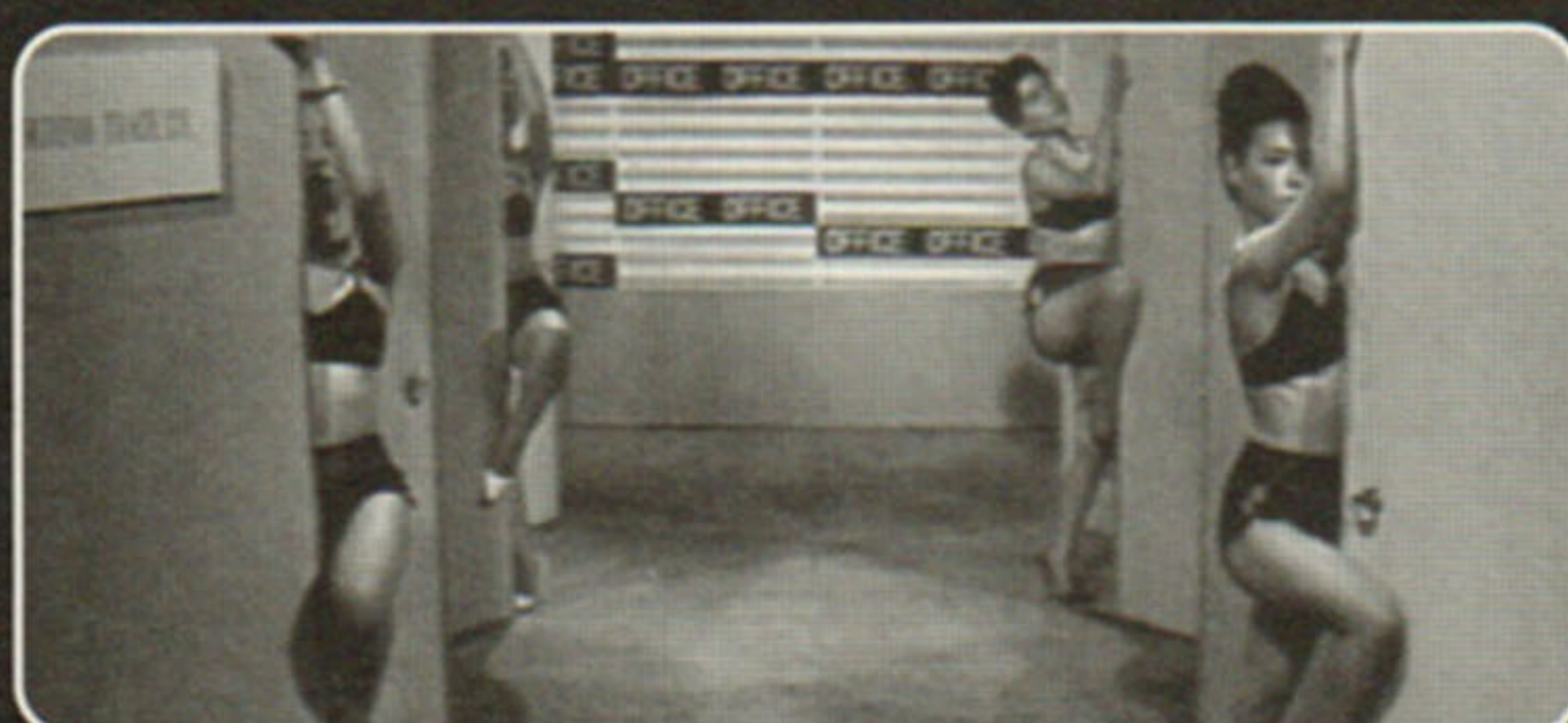
Body) and *Sanji Seigen no Chishiki* (*Knowledge About Birth Control*). The last one was clearly a *basukon eiga* that was made in the late 1940s for educational purposes and approved by the CIE, the occupation authority in charge of film regulation. Curiously it was this film which got the cinema owner into trouble. The police confiscated the film because parts of it were considered obscene and thus in violation of Article 175. What had been permitted during the occupation was not necessarily allowed after Japan regained its independence."³⁰

The frankness of sexual expression encouraged by the occupation was not limited to cinema; the period also saw the emergence of cheap print publications known as *kasutori zasshi*, literally meaning 'dregs magazines', named after an illicit alcoholic brew made from the sediment at the bottom of sake bottles. Titles such as *Ryôki* ('Bizarre')³¹ and the more grotesque SM bible *Kitan Club* proliferated from 1946 onwards, their salacious content not only limited to the kissing films, but also real life crimes, tabloid-style exposés of public figures, and a prurient interest in sex in general. Very few of these publications lasted for more than a couple of issues. In the meantime, the first public striptease show in Japan was staged in November 1947, produced by the Toho Theatrical Company, though its subjects remained immobile behind a large frame, striking artistic semi-nude tableaux poses that sought to emulate traditional Western and Japanese paintings. These shows were similar to those that were permitted at the time in London's first venue of this type, the Windmill Theatre.³² Also permitted was the import of one- or two-reel striptease films from America and Europe. In the one title of this kind I've been able to see, a statuesque troupe of corn-fed American girls, known as the Kimberley Diamonds, take their turns individually to bear their breasts beneath the proscenium, with the banal patter of the compère unnecessarily subtitled in Japanese. Such exotic displays presumably instructed the first generation of Japanese girls in the art of the striptease, and consequently forged the precedent for the emergence of the pink film's precursor, the *shô eiga* (show film).

The *shô eiga*, simple one-reel strip shows staged against exotic backdrops, began to emerge around 1957. Their titles were as unambiguous as their contents: *Naked Angel*, *Strip Tokyo*, *The Princess Who Got Naked*. This field provided the initial momentum for the company Kokuei as it set off on its early sexploitation path in 1958, and Fuji Eiga – a company strongly associated with Mitsugu Ôkura, the president of the original Shintoho company during the same period – also made them. A large number appear to have been produced for the major studios too, with Shochiku and Toei screening them in their theatre chains.³³



above: Images from the early *shô eiga*, or 'show film', *Red Lights of Tokyo* (1963).



Behind the Pink Curtain

The DVD release of *The Notorious Concubines* on the Something Weird label, taken from the catalogue of US exploitation maverick Harry Novak, features two such intriguing cheesecake floorshows among the extras. Produced in Japan on evidently fairly grandiose resources, *Sherbet Nude* and *Red Lights of Tokyo* are not only unavailable for viewing in Japan, but also seem to be completely undocumented. No director credits are listed on the prints, and the Japanese Movie Database lists nothing other than the title of *Red Lights of Tokyo*, a release date of January 1963 and the name of its production company, Koan Pro.

Red Lights of Tokyo unfolds as a short string of vignettes shot in full colour on a series of minimally dressed sets bathed in pastel shades of pink and yellow. In the first, a solitary woman rises and does a quick tour around her sofa while shedding her skimpy negligee, before she lies down to relax again. This is followed by a sequence involving a trio of wriggling exotic-plumed dancers in leopard skins banging bongo drums, their breasts clearly visible beneath their colourful feathered halters. Next up is another sensuous bed scene in the same style as the first, and an oriental-flavoured skit in the vein of the Gilbert and Sullivan musical *The Mikado*, featuring two girls in traditional costume vying for the affections of an ambivalent male by unravelling layer upon layer of kimono. *Sherbet Nude* adopts a slightly more sophisticated tack than the one-scene-one-shot approach of the previous title, and even sports a basic narrative and a primitive animation sequence as it follows a group of girls from the moment they rise from their beds through their early morning showers and the daily grind of their office work, then back to the bedroom again by way of a feverish dream of a gold-painted couple in ornate headgear performing an erotic dance. The thing that strikes one immediately about both titles, when taking into account the contents of early pink films made around the same time, is how Western they seem in terms of the sets and costumes, the aura of self-confident sensuality exuded by its well-rounded artistes and the sultry jazzy sax score that plays in the background. With nothing else from this undocumented vein readily available for viewing, one has to wonder how typical of the *shô eiga* they are.

Of course, what has been discussed so far is the official side of film history. But as censors across the world debated what should be allowed onscreen and what should be judged obscene, beneath the surface a widespread pornographic underground had long proliferated. These hardcore stag films, one-reelers shot without sound on 8mm or 16mm film stock, featuring graphic, unsimulated sexual acts, devoid of cast and crew credits and with the bare minimum of artistic pretension, had been around virtually everywhere since almost day one, with the title *Le voyeur* allegedly representing something of a cinematic first in 1907.³⁴ A number from the first few decades of French cinema

above: Images from another early 'show film', *Sherbet Nude* (year of production unknown).

were strung together by Michel Reilhac and released theatrically in 2002 under the title *The Good Old Naughty Days*, demonstrating just how quickly these films were overwhelmed by an explicitness that still has the power to cause even the most liberal-minded modern viewers to sit bolt upright. Stag films were not exhibited in regular cinemas, but in private clubs where they were not subject to the usual censorship requirements, and often in the waiting rooms of legalised brothels, where they were aimed at fanning the flames of ardour of waiting clients.

These stag films were originally known as *waieiga* ('obscene films', also referred to as *Y-eiga*) in Japan, though the term *burû fuirumu*, a transliteration of the Western term 'blue film', came into use in the '50s and '60s. Their distribution was predominantly controlled by the yakuza, who would accost young men in hot spring resort towns or inner city areas and coax them into tiny four-and-a-half-mat apartments³⁵ where their punters would sit cross-legged on the floor watching explicit scenes of non-faked sexual activity. The possession of such films is still strictly illegal in Japan, though one writer, Takuya Hasegawa (hiding behind the penname Miki Mikio), has written about their hidden history in the book *Burû fuirumu monogatari – himerareta eiga-shi 75-nen* ('Blue Film Story: 75-year History of Films Kept Secret'). A series of five videos was also released in Japan, though with all the graphic images masked out by the standard mosaics. There were a number of different groups at work in Japan producing these films from as early as the 1920s, though naturally the survival rate of their resulting output is low. Apparently, connoisseurs can pinpoint with some degree of accuracy which group made which film through such telltale signs as the locations, performers, and the limited range of stylistic flourishes manifest within their running time, which was seldom more than the standard one-reel, or 15-minute mark. Some were shot in colour, but most were black and white, and the repertoire of straight sex, bestiality, fellatio, cunnilingus, etc. seems no narrower or wider than that of similar foreign productions, which were also illegally imported into Japan from America, China and Europe. Video effectively brought an end to the blue film, replacing it with the similarly un-obscured displays of sexual activity of the illegal under-the-counter *ura-bideo*.

The various levels of legality of all of these works across the globe, the poor conditions of surviving prints and their invisible mode of production and distribution saw the stag film effectively hidden from general public view, and for a long period both unrecognised and unregistered by writers and historians. In one of the most important academic studies of hardcore pornography, *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure and the "Frenzy of the Visible"*, Linda Williams devotes several pages to detailing a number of non-Japanese works viewed from the collection of the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex,

Gender and Reproduction in America. In her study, she draws attention to the difficulties in defining the exact nature of pornography, pointing to the word's etymological roots in the Greek *graphos*, meaning writing or description, and *pornei*, meaning prostitutes.³⁶ By extension of its literal roots of 'writing about prostitutes', we can detect screen pornography's preoccupation with graphic depictions of sexual acts, the rendering of the private public, the invisible visible, and all with the exclusive intention of sexually arousing its consumers.

But popular interpretations of the word and its nuances have been more coloured by context than content. The tide may be turning, but traditionally the pornography of 'porno movies', 'porno theatres' and 'porno magazines' comes tinged with a dark and pejorative hue in the English language, rather than with liberating, celebratory connotations, especially during the '70s and '80s when its high-watermark rise in high street visibility and infiltration into households via the new technology of the videocassette saw its producers increasingly pitched at loggerheads with feminist and conservative movements eager to suppress it. From day one, pornography has been charged by its critics with the power to corrupt and deprave its viewers, debase its subjects and incite men into violent acts against women, and those in positions of authority have done their utmost to either restrict its availability or suppress it entirely. Definitions of what the pornographic actually is have historically been coloured by this 'us and them' dichotomy, and so it has been alternatively defined as, "whatever representations a particular dominant class or group does not want in the hands of another less dominant class or group".³⁷

The term *poruno* has filtered through into the Japanese vocabulary, beginning most notably with Toei's Porno Line (*Poruno rosen*) in 1968, which featured films from the directors Teruo Ishii and Norifumi Suzuki (in fact, Ishii is sometimes credited with introducing the word to Japan), and a few years later with the films produced by Nikkatsu, which the studio branded as Roman Porno. The word also made its way into titles such as *Porno Emperor* (1971), *Porno Pilgrimage* (1972), *Blond Porno Madness* (1972) and *Cruel Porno: Showa Era Bizarre Crime Record* (1972). But as a foreign loan word it essentially signals little more than the promise of scenes of sexual activity. It comes as much divorced from its associated English meanings as its original Greek derivation. If used, it is as a simple label rather than as a stigma. Japanese sex filmmakers have clashed with the censors on a number of occasions, but the industry as a whole has generally not been viewed by society in the same confrontational, semi-legal and threatening light as it has in the West. It is seen more as an accepted facet of modern life.

But even if the pink or Roman Porno movie doesn't satisfy the graphic expectations raised by Western

hardcore, pornography is as pornography does. As mentioned in chapter 1, Japanese law bars the 'obscene' depictions of genitalia from the screen, so by most definitions Japanese erotic films can't really be described as anything other than softcore, but their primary intentions are ultimately the same. In analysing how these films go about achieving their aims of provoking a physical response in their viewers, Williams's analysis of the fundamentals of hardcore pornography still provides a useful framework through which to look at the subject.

The distinction between 'Art' and 'Pornography' became a particularly hot topic during the 20th Century, because of the increased fidelity and more immediate relations between the creator and his subject matter that characterise cinema, not to mention the medium's traditionally lowly status as a populist form of entertainment. But many originally saw the detached real-time visual record of live subjects that the camera afforded as of more use to the scientific community in the years running up to the mass commercial application of this new technology.

A crucial figure in cinema's prehistory is Eadweard Muybridge (1830-1904), whose pioneering studies in motion were initiated when he was hired by Leland Stanford, a wealthy supporter of popular science and the former governor of California, to help him settle a bet with a friend that at certain points in time all four hooves of a trotting horse leave the ground. Against a plain background, Muybridge set up a row of cameras with shutter speeds of around 1/1000 second, which were triggered individually by the horse passing through a series of tripwires. With this apparatus he produced a sequence of still photographs that showed the animal in various stages of movement. By the time the strip of photos was published on the cover of *Scientific American* in 1877, Leland had proved his point. Where the human eye had failed, the objective eye of the camera had succeeded in settling a question that had vexed man since time immemorial.

Muybridge later put his technique to commercial use, developing the circular zoopraxiscope (or zoogyroscope) to animate these short sequences of moving figures, and creating bands of photos to be sold for use within it. His experiments were of great interest to an artistic community increasingly concerned with correct anatomical representations of animals and human figures frozen in various stages of motion, and in 1887 Muybridge published the eleven-volume *Animal Locomotion*. Its scientific motivation justified the objective depiction of fully naked human figures, but as Williams notes, its apparent objectivity did not stretch to the women's bodies. While the men run, walk, throw, catch and carry with the minimum of props, in keeping with the aesthetic fashions of the era of Alma-Tadema and his ilk, the women are portrayed draped in semi-transparent robes against a number of backdrops

(notably beds) and holding cigarettes and fruit baskets, "in traditionally feminine movements of twirling and self-touching."³⁸ In one instance, a naked woman pours water from an amphora into another's mouth. Each woman appears as if in reverie, wistful, inscrutable, a source of mystery and fascination, and as Williams puts it, "embedded in a mise-en-scène that places her in a more specific imaginary place and time."³⁹ Though these short sequences of photographs cannot be said to possess a narrative in themselves (i.e. a beginning, a middle and an end), it's clear that from the very start that women's bodies were being subjected to a notably different gaze.

Similar to the way in which Muybridge's experiments revealed what had hitherto been beyond normal human perceptual abilities was the early sequence of images produced at Thomas Edison's laboratories entitled *Fred Ott's Sneeze* (1894). At a mere 81 frames in length, the film was judged too short to be released commercially for viewing in Edison's yet-to-be-released Kinetoscope peepshow device. The full contents of this "entire record of a sneeze from the first taking of a pinch of snuff to the recovery" were instead published as a series of sequential still photographs in the magazine *Harper's Weekly* on 24 March, 1894 at the behest of journalist Barnet Phillips, accompanied by an article entitled 'Record of a Sneeze'.⁴⁰ Phillips broke down the various stages of the sneeze into the ten discrete units of 'priming', 'the nascent sensation', 'the first distortion', 'expectancy', 'pre-meditation', 'preparation', 'beatitude', 'oblivion', 'explosion' and 'recovery'.

Though its subject Fred Ott was a middle-aged man, according to Williams, in an early correspondence with Edison, Barnet had originally requested, "some nice looking young person", later elaborating that this should preferably be a woman.⁴¹ The spectacle of physical reflex actions captured and controlled on film initiated by *Fred Ott's Sneeze* is an example of what Williams terms "the frenzy of the visible", and would prove an early antecedent for more sexually explicit portrayals of involuntary bodily spasms such as the celebratory 'money shot', so often screened in delirious slow motion in hardcore's heyday, as if to savour every split second of the sexual climax.

Curiously, in 1895, the very same year that cinema as we know it was unveiled, the X-ray, another discovery that shed light on the limits of human visual capabilities, was discovered by Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen. Though the X-ray camera was to become a device of primarily medical application, in its early days its novelty value also lent it its own distinct popular appeal. One of Röntgen's first demonstrations of the X-ray's power was a photographic plate of his wife Berthe's left hand. But more than just a portrait of the structure of the bones beneath the human skin, the two-dimensional silhouette of the hand's skeletal structure was pinpointed as belonging to a woman through the

opaque mass fused to Berthe's index finger representing her wedding band.⁴² The image of Berthe's hand put such photographs in vogue at the end of the nineteenth century, and "the female hand X-ray became a fetish object par excellence", simultaneously drawing attention to the subject's gender and revealing for the first time the invisible secrets beneath a woman's skin.

Though this roundabout digression might all sound a little clinical, the point being made is that these early antecedents forged the trajectory along which cinematic pornography would evolve: the fetishization of the female figure (either by an exaggeration of the physical differences provided by nature, or by means of external paraphernalia such as high heels, red lips and fishnets), the spectacle of bodies wracked involuntarily in throes of pleasure or pain to provoke a consequent spontaneous response in its viewers, and the attempt to delve beneath the surface of the subject and probe her hidden mysteries.

Even when completely unhampered by censorship, hardcore has its own problems in visually depicting the involuntary reflex action of the female orgasm due to the very hidden nature of the feminine pudenda. Filmmakers can only attempt to form a connection with their assumed male viewers by making them feel complicit in the woman's delirious moans and groans through identification with the porn actors, by way of over-the-shoulder viewpoints, inquisitive close-ups of penetration and climactic male cum shots. But while the male actor's faces remain controlled, blank and inexpressive, the woman's face is really the only place for the camera to linger in order to register her sexual satiation in the absence of any further physical evidence.

The constraints of screen censorship in Japan have kept the defining traits of hardcore pornography – that is the explicit genital depictions of penises (erect or otherwise), penetration scenes and labial 'pink' shots – barred from the pink film. Filmmakers have therefore been able to develop their own form of cinematic shorthand to elaborate more succinctly the genre's basic tenets. A typical example is provided by a 1983 Roman Porno film directed by Masaru Konuma entitled *Rope and Breasts*. In one sequence, a naked girl has an enema inserted into an orifice (which one exactly is left unclear) and made to squat in a large glass bowl filled with water in front of a crowd of male onlookers. She quivers for several moments as she is forced to hold it in, before violently releasing the viscous fluid into the waters, as her spectators stare on mesmerised in a mixture of curiosity and awe, like kids at a birthday party watching a clown conjuring up balloon animals.

Though perverse, this scene is not particularly explicit, though it still gels with many of Williams's observations: "The animating male fantasy [of hardcore cinema] might therefore be described as the



above: Proto-feminism in Roman Porno: two scenes from Tatsumi Kumashiro's *Sayuri Ichijō: Wet Lust* (1972). The real-life stripper's protégée Harumi demonstrates the 'open stage' technique (**top**). Behind the scenes Sayuri and Harumi (Hiroko Isayama) compare battle scars (**bottom**). ©Nikkatsu Corporation

(impossible) attempt to capture visually this frenzy of the visible in a female body whose orgasmic excitement can never be objectively measured. It is not surprisingly, then, that so much [early hardcore] fantasy revolves around situations in which the woman's sexual pleasure is elicited involuntarily, often against her will, in scenarios of rape or ravishment. In these scenarios the unwilling victim's eventual manifestations of pleasure are offered as the genre's proof of a sincerity that under other conditions might seem less sure."⁴³

It is interesting to compare Konuma's films, many of which focus on bondage and violently sadomasochistic scenarios, with those of Tatsumi Kumashiro, who is considered to be one of the most accomplished of the directors to work at Nikkatsu during the '70s. Kumashiro's 1972 film *Sayuri Ichijō: Wet Lust* features the famous striptease artist Ichijō playing under her own name, and marked one of the director's many looks at the imagined behind-the-scenes lives of workers in the sex industry (which also includes another fictionalised biopic of a celebrity stripper, *Madoka Mika: The Woman Who Wets Her Finger*, 1984). Ichijō earned herself a

certain notoriety in 1970 when she pioneered the 'open stage' or *tokudashi* (literally 'special appearance') style of striptease, handing out magnifying glasses to leering audiences for the pièce de résistance to her act, the 'genital inspection'. Such lack of prudence saw her charged with public obscenity and jailed for a short period that year. The film makes much of her elaborate on-stage performances. In one sequence she elegantly unravels her kimono layer by layer using a samurai sword. In another she drips hot wax on her body (followed by a back stage dialogue scene as she applies slices of lemon to soothe the singes on her bare torso). Unsurprisingly enough, however, screen censorship precluded the kind of unobscured views her original audiences might once have enjoyed. How then to visualise that which can't be shown? The solution lies in one memorably messy image of Sayuri's ambitious younger rival Harumi (Hiroko Isayama) ejaculating milk-sodden lumps of tissue paper from her vagina over the face of an enraptured spectator in the front row. Again, the shot manifests Williams's "frenzy of the visible", but in this case Harumi is clearly in control over her own bodily contractions.

Images of perversion such as these are rife within the pink and Roman Porno movie, manifesting covertly that which the hardcore film is permitted to show overtly, to stay just that one step within censorship boundaries. Noses wedge themselves between gyrating buttocks; breasts are kneaded mercilessly like lumps of dough; tongues loll around mouths uncontrollably; moistened fingers dart feverishly over skimpy panties, the dark thatch a tantalising shadow beneath the semi-translucent white cotton as they explore the pubic contours; while naked flesh bulges between elaborate filigrees of rope. To some, such clearly-drawn limits are seen as offering their own freedom. As Jack Hunter puts it in his intro to *Eros in Hell: Sex, Blood and Madness in Japanese Cinema*, "For many European directors the all-too-easy descent into hardcore pornography inevitably goes hand in hand with the negation of vision and creativity, as the depiction of close-up penetration becomes the sole function of their art. Extreme underground Japanese filmmakers, denied this option, have had to double back upon their own imaginative resources to emulate both the hypnotic impact and total flesh experience that hardcore offers."⁴⁴ Others have not been so generous. In his essay *The Japanese Eroducton*, written in 1972, Donald Richie describes his subject matter as, "the limpest of softcore, and though there is much breast and buttock display, though there are simulations of intercourse, none of the working parts are ever shown."⁴⁵ For Richie the question is, "how to stimulate when the means are missing." His conclusions are that as erotica, the pink film ultimately fails. Which of the writers one agrees with is up to the individual, but it is worth

remembering that over 25 years separates the publication of these two opposing standpoints, and the pink film had undergone a vast amount of changes in the interim period.

To Richie's and Hunter's comments, I'd like to add another, slightly less polemical, appraisal that I think goes a little further in describing the fundamental difference in approach between Japanese and Western pornography. In an essay on Hisayasu Satô's *The Bedroom* (1992), Pia D. Harritz writes, "It is a common fact that the pink movies are, generally speaking, more intellectual, sinister and sadomasochistic in their display of and exploration of the female body. The female body is not so 'willing' and 'open' as in so many of the western adult movies (the 'Pornotopian' type) where it is always 'bedroom-time' and where the woman is almost always a 'lusty/busty' and playful blonde. In pink movies it is generally a more repressed, raped, violated, and mutilated female body that is being displayed."⁴⁶

The question that is sure to arise in the minds of many viewers encountering such films for the first time is, to what extent can we really attribute some of the distinctly odd sexual practices that occur within them to circumventing the censors, and what role do cultural differences play in nurturing the multitudinous scenes of voyeurism, bondage and humiliation? One would be opening a can of worms trying to justify many of the pink film's excesses from any sort of feminist perspective. The lines in the sand between pleasure and pain, and consent and refusal are difficult to gauge, with the oft-repeated cries of *yada!* ('I don't like it!'), *hanashite!* ('let me go!'), or *yamete!* ('stop!') from the actresses often staged to have a touch of the 'methinks the lady doth protest too much' about them. These films are, after all, made with the intention of pandering to the desires of their male audiences.

Justifying such representations with recourse to 'cultural differences' and simplistic East-West dichotomies is a very sticky exercise. The overworked salaryman seeking five minutes of sexual gratification between the office and his return home to his waiting wife and the submissive sensuality of the oriental woman are both hoary clichés well worked within the Western imagination, but such stereotypes are just as often reinforced within the cinema of the nation itself. During the '80s, attempts to explain Japanese films and culture in terms of their deviance from the Western norm (whatever that is) were rife in books such as Ian Buruma's *A Japanese Mirror: Heroes and Villains in Japanese Culture* and Nicholas Bornoff's *Pink Samurai: The Pursuit and Politics of Sex in Japan*. Both make for highly entertaining reads, each with its own share of illuminating revelations and insights, though they are probably more relevant to the climate of the '80s than nowadays. But the overall case is often so much more complex than it is portrayed, and in any case, perhaps such analyses of male-female gender roles are more

the domain of sociologists and psychologists than film critics. Without wishing to brush the issue under the carpet entirely, I'll assume the viewer is mature and intuitive enough to interpret the more outré aspects of Japanese erotic cinema in their own way.

For all that, pink film's dark predilection for sexual violence has been somewhat overplayed in the rather vicarious writings of Western observers like Thomas Weisser, both in his *Japanese Cinema Encyclopedia: The Sex Films* and the numerous articles published in his magazine *Asian Cult Cinema* (formerly known as *Asian Trash Cinema*), and Jack Hunter in *Eros in Hell: Sex, Blood and Madness in Japanese Cinema*. Sure, some pink and Roman Porno films do feature atrocious scenes of sexual savagery, but by no means all of them. To such writers sex, violence and death are an integral part of Japanese erotica. As Hunter puts it in his intro, the films offer "a vision of the realm of sex as Hell on earth or, conversely, Hell's confines as the human body and the madness which that mortal incarceration offers".⁴⁷ Such notions have proven infectious, finding their way, for example, into the gloomy quasi-religious imagery employed by the company Salvation, with their packaging of a number of recent, moderately restrained, pink offerings such as Shinji Imaoka's *Lunch Box* and Toshiki Satô's *The Lost Virgin* in the UK, their covers sporting the lurid catch-line "Baptised in blood – Consumed by Guilt – Gratified in Death".

The more critical voices also ignore the fact that during the late '70s and '80s, the time in which the bulk of Japan's rougher fare was being produced, fantasies of violence against women played a central role not only in the men-only environment of the hardcore theatre, but also in titles, particularly within the horror market, intended for a wider audience: *I Spit on Your Grave* (1978), *The Toolbox Murders* (1978), *Killer's Moon* (1978) and *The House on the Edge of the Park* (1980) are all films that spring to mind. Modern Western audiences may feel distinctly uneasy when confronted with these kinds of images now, especially when staged as a turn-on, but it was certainly not always this way.

If Japanese pornography is viewed solely through reductive descriptions of its more outrageous elements, then this indeed makes it a depressingly misogynist and terminally uninteresting field to wade through. As Williams maps out however, American hardcore pornography has changed substantially through the years, and not solely due to the efforts of feminist groups like Women Against Pornography and the censorious cultural climate of the Reaganite years. Having moved from the theatre to the living room, it has adapted its appeal to take into account more diverse markets of couples, gays and solitary women viewers. Pink cinema is no different, as shall be revealed over the following chapters, and it is the industry's adaptation to fit the economic, political and social climate that lends the subject a deeper interest.



above: Lost in translation: Confusing iconography dominates the packaging of pink from British DVD company Salvation.

following page, top: Puppet on a string: Kiyoshi Komori's heavily influential *Japanese Torture Punishment History* (1964), the first eroduction to make such scenes of torture and bondage its entire *raison d'être*.

Footnotes

¹³ Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Screen* 16, no.3:6-18.

¹⁴ The public unveiling of the Lumières' Cinematograph at the Salon Indienne is most commonly seen as the birth of cinema, but it is rarely remembered that some two months prior, on 1 November, 1895, at the Berlin Wintergarten, the Skladanowsky Brothers, Max and Emil, had projected pictures to the paying public using their Bioscop camera/projector system.

¹⁵ Harding, Colin and Popple, Simon. *In the Kingdom of the Shadows: A Companion to Early Cinema*. London: Cygnus Arts, 1996: 62. Other writers have their own ideas about when and in which films nudity first appeared in Britain; for example Tom Dewe Mathews in *Censored: The Story of Film Censorship in Britain* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1994: 7) cites an 1897 film entitled *How Bridget Served the Salad Undressed*. The contents of such films cannot be verified as any prints have long decayed.

¹⁶ Mathews, Tom Dewe. *Censored*: 8.

¹⁷ Ibid: 70. Mathews points out that the case was a lot more complicated than this. Firstly, the BBFC certainly operated to their own set of internal laws in its first decades, depending on the individual whims of its examiners. Secondly, nudity often did sneak by the censors, either in films that were exhibited without a censorship certificate in private film societies, or in a few cases, such as several of Cecil B. DeMille's biblical epics and Fred Niblo's *Ben-Hur*, which "were passed without comment by the board."

¹⁸ Ibid: 76.

¹⁹ Bernardi, Joanne. *Writing in Light: The Silent Scenario and the Japanese Pure Film Movement* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001) provides a good introduction to Japanese cinema's early years.

²⁰ For more information regarding the banning of *Zigomar* see Hase, Masato. "Cinemaphobia in Taisho Japan: Zigomar, Delinquent Boys and Somnambulism." *Iconics* 4, 1998; Makino, Mamoru. "On the Conditions of Film Censorship in Japan Before Its Systemization." In *In Praise of Film Studies: Essays in Honor of Makino Mamoru*. Gerow, Aaron and Nornes, Abé Mark, eds. Ann Arbor: Kinema Club, 2001: 46-66.

²¹ Again, the quest for firsts in the absence of surviving evidence is a highly challenging one. These films represented first significant roles for female performers. Worth noting is that Kurishima had already appeared onscreen fifteen years earlier at the age of 6 in the M. Pathé company's *New Peach Boy* (*Shin Momotarô*, 1909). Bernardi, Joanne goes into some detail about the early appearances of women in Japanese cinema in *Writing in Light*.

²² Anderson, Joseph L. and Richie, Donald. *The Japanese Film: Art and Industry*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982: 42.

²³ Imported American comedies such as Ernst Lubitsch's *The Marriage Circle* (1924), the early works of D.W. Griffith and Cecil B. DeMille, the films of Charlie Chaplin and the melodramas of the Bluebird Company were heavily cited as favourites of the Shochiku directors of the '20s and early '30s.

²⁴ Shimizu, Akira, "War and Cinema in Japan" in Nornes, Abé Mark and Fukushima, Yukio (eds), *The Japan/America Film Wars: WWII Propaganda and Its Cultural Contexts*. USA, Harwood, 1991: 28-29. The most detailed account of Japanese cinema during the wartime years is High, Peter B. *The Imperial Screen: Japanese Film Culture in the Fifteen Years' War, 1931-1945*. Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 2003.

²⁵ Hirano, Kyoko. *Mr. Smith Goes to Tokyo: Japanese Cinema Under the American Occupation, 1945-52*. Washington: Smithsonian Institute, 1992: 16.

²⁶ Ibid: 3.

²⁷ Ibid: 154-165. Hirano talks of the emergence of kissing in Japanese films at some length. She also mentions an early anomalous example in Keisuke Sasaki's *Women Are in Every World* (*Onna wa itsu no yo ni mo*) way back in 1931.

²⁸ Richie, Donald. "The Japanese Kiss" in *A Lateral View*. California: Stone Bridge: 223.

²⁹ Domenig, Roland. "A History of Sex Education Films in Japan Part 1: The Pre-War Years." *Midnight Eye*. www.midnighteye.com/features/a-history-of-sex-education-films-in-japan-part-1.shtml.



³⁰ "A History of Sex Education Films in Japan Part 2: The Post-War Years and the Basukon Eiga." www.midnighteye.com/features/a-history-of-sex-education-films-in-japan-part-2.shtml.

³¹ Is it a merely a coincidence that a fetish magazine with the title *Bizarre* was founded by the illustrator-photographer "John Willie" in Britain in exactly the same year, 1946?

³² The Windmill Theatre was the subject of Stephen Frears's 2005 film, *Mrs. Henderson Presents*.

³³ Kuwahara, Ietoshi. *Kirareta waisetsu: Eirin katto-shi* (Yomiuri shinbunsha, 1993). pg 23.

³⁴ In the absence of material evidence, early film history often plays like a game of extended Chinese whispers, and especially in the underground world of pornography. In the footnotes of her *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure and the "Frenzy of the Visible"* (Berkeley: University of California: 321), Linda Williams mentions this particular title quoted from an earlier 3-volume study, *L'érotisme au cinéma* by Lo Duca (Paris: Pauvert, 1958). Williams sensibly questions how the author has dated this particular film to 1907, but nonetheless draws the conclusion that the first stag movies were probably produced in France. Tom Dewe Mathews, on the other hand, asserts that after a group of adventurous Brazilians got their hands on one of Edison's cameras, "by 1904 Brazil was supplying not only London's smoking room but also the Parisien brothels, and by 1910 South America had cornered the world market in hardcore films" (Mathews: 13). The Wikipedia online encyclopedia however (accessed 2008-1-1), under the entry 'Pornographic Film', cites Robertson, Patrick's *Film Facts* (New York: Billboard, 2001), which states "the earliest pornographic motion picture which can definitely be dated is *À l'écu d'or ou la bonne auberge*", (France, 1908); "the plot depicts a weary soldier who has a tryst with an inn's servant girl."

³⁵ The *jô*, or *tatami* mat, is the standard unit for measuring apartment size. A small one-room apartment is typically six *jô*. Four-and-a-half *jô* is very small.

³⁶ Williams: 9.

³⁷ Williams: 11, paraphrasing Kendrick, Walter. *The Secret Museum: Pornography in Modern Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987: 92-94.

³⁸ Ibid: 41.

³⁹ Ibid: 40.

⁴⁰ Phillips's article is reproduced in full in Musser, Charles. *Edison Motion Pictures, 1890-1900: An Annotated Filmography*. Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997: 88.

⁴¹ Williams: 52.

⁴² Lippit, Akira Mizuta. *Atomic Light (Shadow Optics)*. University of Minnesota, 2005: 44.

⁴³ Williams: 50.

⁴⁴ Hunter, Jack. Foreword.

⁴⁵ Richie, Donald. "The Eroduction" in *A Lateral View: Essays on Culture and Style in Contemporary Japan*. California: Stone Bridge, 1971 (reprinted in 1992): 156.

⁴⁶ Harritz, Pia D. "Consuming the Female Body: Pinku Eiga and the Case of Sagawa Issei." In *Media Res*. www.medievidenskab-odense.dk/index.php?id=57 (accessed 2008-1-1).

⁴⁷ Hunter, Jack. Foreword.

Ama Glamour and the Rise of the Flesh Actress

Naturally, the pink genre was not hatched from the void overnight. The years spanning the departure of the American occupation forces in 1952 and the meteoric rise of the *eroduction* after the appearance of Satoru Kobayashi's *Flesh Market* in 1962 marked a period of ferment for Japanese cinema. After seven years of occupation censorship and the dark, oppressive years of war leading up to them, long pent-up desires found an ebullient release on the cinema screen. Before the mass proliferation of television, the big screen provided a dynamic and highly effective arena for the people to see their hopes and fears for a new uncertain future reflected, given form and disseminated across the nation, as well as serving as a window onto what was going on elsewhere across the globe. The world was moving forward at breakneck speed, and the newly democratised Japan was keen to make up lost ground on the frontrunners.

The popular genres of the home drama, *jidai-geki* (period drama) and literary adaptation ruled the release rosters, but with over 500 films released annually in its peak years and a market now led more by popular taste rather than steered by a higher authority, it was only natural that more sensationalist material soon emerged. During the '50s the slow insinuation of depictions of sex and nudity into the nation's cinema pretty much mirrored what was happening in Europe and America, as producers tested the waters of what was deemed acceptable, but there was perhaps one important distinction. While the gradual erosion of censorship boundaries in America or Britain came from either foreign imports or the growth of an alternative independent market of arthouses, grindhouses, private cinema clubs and drive-ins, in Japan it came from the mainstream itself.

The period we are talking about roughly coincides with what is referred to as Japanese cinema's Second Golden Age (*ôgon jidai*), after a particularly fecund earlier period in the '30s, prior to the disruption of the war. Though separated by two decades, several crucial components are shared; aside from representing periods when the major studios seemed to be more or less in tune with the demands of the cinema-going public, the films of both eras manifest an anticipation of the future (often tinged with a sense of nostalgia for the past, or undercut by tension between the younger and older generations) and a recognition that Japan is part of the wider world. In an essay entitled 'Perspectives on the Japanese film', Nagisa Ôshima, the leading spokesman for the New Wave directors of the '60s, identified this concept of internationalisation as very much a crucial component of modernisation. He also

stated that, though most societies complete their modernisation in one go, because of the route Japan took in the initial process, with the promising early blossoming of East-West relations in the Meiji period ending in the chaos and defeat of the Pacific War, the country was forced to modernise a second time.⁴⁸ (Of course, it has been the subject of much debate, both internally and externally, whether this second 'Internationalisation' is better described as 'Americanization')

The Second Golden Age coincided with Japan opening itself up to the outside world once again, but this time the internationalisation of its cinema was a full two-way process. Though several works by directors including Hiroshi Shimizu, Tomotaka Tasaka and Tomu Uchida had been shown to great acclaim at the Venice Film Festival before the war, until 1951 when Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon* next turned heads eastwards at Venice there had really been little recognition in the West that Japan even had a film industry of any note.⁴⁹ This momentous international success was followed by Teinosuke Kinugasa's *Gate of Hell*, which was awarded the Grand Prix at the 1954 Cannes Film Festival and became the first recipient of the Honorary Award for foreign films (precursor to the Best Foreign Film Category) at the Academy Awards, and Hiroshi Inagaki's *Samurai: The Legend of Musashi Miyamoto* in 1955. Indeed, the '50s represented Japanese cinema at its prime. With little threat from alternative forms of visual entertainment, cinema attendances reached an all-time high in 1958, and local films claimed a far greater portion of the market than imported ones (although it should be remembered Japan had import quotas for foreign films at the time, allotting only a certain number of films per year to each company.) It is a decade represented by such internationally-feted masters as Keisuke Kinoshita, Akira Kurosawa, Kenji Mizoguchi, Mikio Naruse and Yasujirô Ozu, and one in which the *chanbara* period swashbuckler was as popular as the Western was in America. There was, however, another side to Japanese cinema that didn't make it so far overseas.

During this Second Golden Age, both production and distribution were dominated by six studios: Daiei, Nikkatsu, Shochiku, Toei, Toho, and Shintoho. This is not to say that there was a complete absence of an independent filmmaking sector, but with each of the majors exhibiting their films across the country through their own circuit of theatres, the distribution possibilities for such productions were somewhat limited. By the end of the '50s, the independent sector had all but petered out.⁵⁰

The newest additions to this roll-call of studios were Toei, founded in 1951, and Shintoho, founded in 1947 after a series of labour strikes at Toho Studios sent many of its creative agents scuttling off to regroup under new management: Shintoho literally means "New Toho".⁵¹ Shintoho is often seen as a studio born out of idealism, though it is worth remembering that despite its reputation as a leftist stronghold, ironically it was founded as a production outfit for those employees unwilling to participate in the strike. Still, many of the country's most-lauded directors worked there in the early years. Akira Kurosawa made *Stray Dog* for Shintoho in 1949; Yasujiro Ozu directed *The Munakata Sisters* in 1950; Kenji Mizoguchi gave us *Life of Oharu* in 1952, while Hiroshi Shimizu made a number of late-career works, including *Mr. Shosuke Ohara* (1949), *A Mother's Love* (1950) and *The Shiinomi School* (1955).

But the company was relatively small, and in the face of low budgets and strong competition from the other five, under the auspices of maverick producer Mitsugu Ôkura its release slate soon took the form of more direct appeals to its audience's less sophisticated side. Born 22 November, 1899 (died 15 September, 1978), the one-time *benshi* (silent film narrator), Ôkura was drafted into Shintoho in 1955, at a time when the studio was losing over \$100,000 a month. Having previously proved his mettle running the small Fuji Eiga rental studios (nothing to do with the camera manufacturer) and his own chain of thirty six theatres, he seemed an ideal choice to turn the company's fortunes around. And this, for the next few years at least, is exactly what he did.⁵²

So, towards the latter half of the '50s, Shintoho's output became primarily given over to luridly-marketed exploitation flicks commonly referred to as *ero-guro* (short for 'erotic grotesque') within the horror, youth movie and gangster genres. This is the studio where cult maverick Teruo Ishii started his career, adding spice to the basic yakuza plot several years before Toei had distilled the genre down to its basic elements with its *ninkyô* films of the '60s. It is where Nobuo Nakagawa primed local tastes for the gory and the supernatural, just as Hammer did in Britain, with his atmospheric *kaidan* (ghost story) films such as *The Ghost of Kasane* (1957), *Black Cat Mansion* (1958), *The Lady Vampire* (1959) and *The Ghost of Yotsuya* (1959). And Shintoho had already violated one taboo, which was in depicting the emperor in *The Meiji Emperor and the Great Russo-Japanese War* in 1957, part of a string of nationalistic and ambitious (not to mention highly profitable) war epics that included Toshio Shimura's *God of War Admiral Yamamoto and the Combined Fleet* (1956) and Kiyoshi Komori's *Pacific War: The Mystery of Battleship Michinoko* (1960).

Shintoho were certainly not alone in celebrating the female form. According to Anderson and Richie's *The Japanese Film: Art and Industry*, nudity first crept into Japanese cinema in *To the End of the Sun* (1954),

with Yukiko Shimazaki providing an added frisson to this tale set on Japanese-occupied Rusan Island in the Philippines during the final days of the Pacific War. This independently-produced work was distributed by Shochiku and directed by Satsuo Yamamoto, who had already made several cinematic anti-war statements with a strong left-wing bent that had goaded the occupation authorities, including *War and Peace* (co-directed with Fumio Kamei in 1947 and nothing to do with the Tolstoy epic) and *Vacuum Zone* (1952).

Sex, or at least the promise of it, became an increasing component of the youth film genre that burgeoned after Nikkatsu released *Season of the Sun* (1956, adapted by Takumi Furukawa from a novel by Shintarô Ishihara⁵³), with the titles that followed including Kô Nakahira's *Crazed Fruit* (1956) and Hiroshi Noguchi's *Resistance of the Flesh* (1957), in which Hisako Tsukuba provided the flesh, if not the resistance. Also, the anti-prostitution law or *baishun bôshi-hô* of 1956 (which came into effect following year) saw a short-lived boom in the so-called *Akasen* genre ('red light' films, though the term actually translates as 'red line'), with Mizoguchi's final film *Street of Shame* (1956) for Daiei being the one outstanding title of a fad to which all of the majors contributed, with films including Keigo Kimura's *Women*

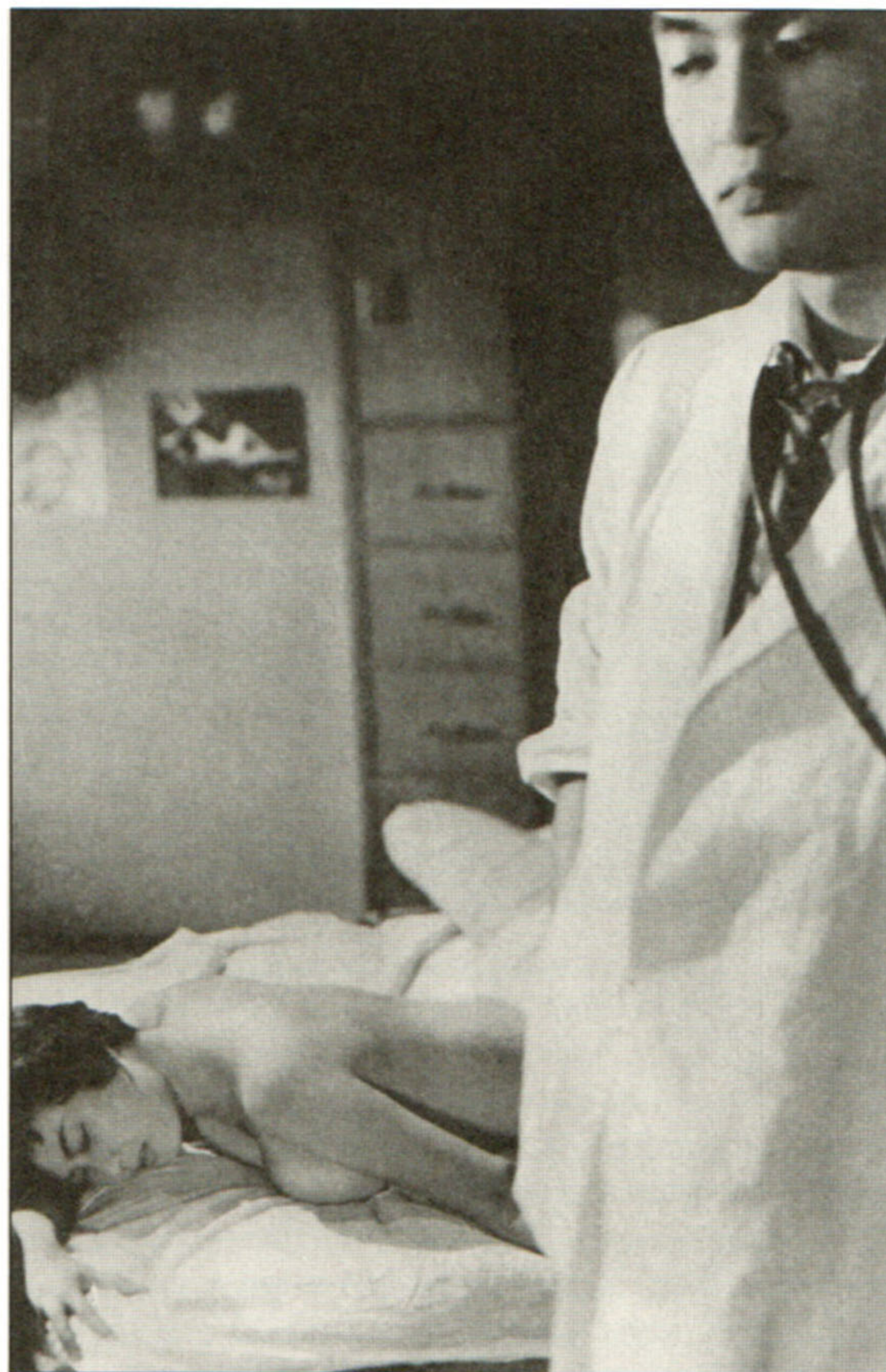


in the Attic (1956), also for Daiei, and Yûzô Kawashima's *Suzaki Paradise: Red Signal* (1956) for Nikkatsu. The off-limits milieu, permeated by the heady charge of sexual currency, proved markedly more contentious when presented on the cinema screen as entertainment than it had done in real-life, and as such these films provoked fierce criticism and debate upon their release.

In the early years of its existence, not only had the censorship board, Eirin, been pretty inconsistent with what it had allowed to reach the screen in domestic productions, it had also been possible for distributors of foreign films to bypass the body entirely. Prosecuting films was never the business of Eirin. If a film was deemed offensive or obscene, this was the business of the police. The main source of resistance to the increased eroticism of '50s cinema therefore came from civil groups across the country, who pushed their rights as citizens to spur the authorities into keeping these pernicious influences from local screens. Being essentially a watchdog simultaneously run by and acting in the interests of the industry, Eirin found itself falling under increasing criticism from such groups at this time. When, in 1954 Yasuki Chiba's *Temptation of Pleasure* caused protests across a number of regions of Japan, Eirin reacted by introducing the *seijin*, or adult, category for films deemed as unsuitable for minors.⁵⁴

Most of the early films to be branded with this new adult certificate were foreign. It was not until 1962, however, that it became mandatory for all films to be passed through Eirin, and the board's seal of approval, in the form of a five-digit number, became a requirement on all film posters from 1964. Eirin was forced to undergo other changes as well, due to a perceived lack of fairness. In 1956, it was reorganised to include figures from outside of the industry, including professors, lawyers and teachers, and a fee system was introduced, whereby the companies were charged per metre of film submitted. These developments further served to increase Eirin's independence from the major studios, which had such a strong hold on the film business.

With the birth of the *seijin* category, the film companies had increased liberty to explore avenues other than the family market. But perhaps few were as steadfast as Shintoho in their reduction of the company's films' appeal to the basic B-movie fundamentals of ghouls, gangsters, guns and girls during the late '50s. Churned out on a monthly basis and circulating on double or triple bills, the allure of Shintoho's movies was boldly spelt out for all to see in their titles, initiating a tradition that has found its natural home in the pink world. *The Military Police and the Dismembered Beauty* (1957), *Flesh Actress Murder: Five Culprits* (1957), *The Nude Model Murder Case* (1958), *Priestess with the Sullied Flesh* (1958), *Violence Girl* (1959), *Jailbreak from Women's Death Row* (1960), and *Female Slave Ship* (1960); the general public, needless to say, lapped them all up.



above: Yôko Mihara lies prone in *The Nude Model Murder Case*, directed by Nagayoshi Akasaka, one of the many sensationalist quickies produced by Shintoho in the late '50s. ©Shintoho

opposite: Sun, sea and sex: *Taiyôzoku* ('sun tribe') films such as Nikkatsu's *Crazed Fruit* (1956), directed by Kô Nakahira and scripted by Shintarô Ishihara from his own novel, heralded a new age of permissiveness in Japanese cinema. ©Nikkatsu Corporation

Following the bankruptcy of Shintoho in 1961, many of these titles remain notably absent from chronicles of the country's cinematic history – mere listings in catalogues. With the decomposing prints sealed up and forgotten in private vaults, their content can only be guessed at from the names on their eye-catching posters. One strain among Shintoho's colourful output that has been picked up on and made available on DVD in Japan is perhaps the most curious subgenre of them all, the *ama* or 'Girl Diver' films, a series that revolved around the communities of Japan's celebrated women divers who scour the ocean floor for shellfish, most notably *awabi* (abalone), clams and sometimes pearls.⁵⁵

The phenomenon of diving girl communities is not actually unique to Japan, finding its parallel in the form of the *henya* in Korea, as recognised in the 2004 documentary *Ms. Ryan, an Ama Diver*. However, these Korean counterparts never seem to have been afforded quite the same cinematic status, with one notable exception provided by *My Mother, the Mermaid* (2004). They have certainly never been rendered elsewhere in such an openly erotic manner as they were in Japanese cinema.



above: *Reef of the Ama* (1958), Nikkatsu's contribution to the girl diver genre, presented Hisako Tsukuba as a rival to Michiko Maeda in the 'flesh actress' field. ©Nikkatsu Corporation

Often given a cursory mention in Western texts, but seldom seen, the scattering of titles that Shintohe made between 1956 and 1960 featuring these vibrant and earthy women of the waves are often described as adopting a style heavily indebted to Italian neo-realism.⁵⁶ They in fact owe far more to Roger Corman than Roberto Rossellini, and are certainly no lost classics of Japanese cinema, but are of interest primarily as cinematic curios representative of the lowbrow pre-*eroduction* market Shintohe were then courting, and for pushing the envelope as far as it would go in terms of putting female nudity up onscreen where one and all could see it.

But even as the *ama* were being fetishized in their own nation's cinema, they found themselves falling under the prurient photographic gaze of the Western anthropologist. The foundations for this early wave of overseas interest were laid by the publication of the first Western study by Italian researcher and photographer Fosco Maraini. Following his first encounter with his subjects, detailed in the book *Meeting with Japan* in 1959, came *Hekura: The Diving Girls' Island*, first published in 1960 in Italy, with an English translation following in 1962. The book unfolded as a first person account of Maraini's voyage to the eponymous island in the Sea of Japan, in an attempt to take a series of photographs and capture a brief segment of film footage of the *ama* underwater.

To be fair, there were plenty of reasons to be interested in the *ama* other than the purely cosmetic. Culturally they are quite distinct from the average Japanese, revealing a heterogeneity within the country that is barely acknowledged. Living dotted around the coastline in small, tight-knit communities, the *ama* live, or at least they did at the time, in villages quite distinct from other fishing or peasant villages, and they seldom

marry outside their kind. Boasting their own dialect and with many of the women considerably taller and more statuesque than the norm, they were once believed to be a different race entirely.

But it was the *ama*'s diving skills that attracted the most attention. As detailed in an article by Luis Marden entitled 'Ama, Sea Nymphs of Japan' that appeared in *National Geographic* magazine in July 1971, the average underwater foray lasts around 45-50 seconds and is to a depth of around 30 feet, though some have been known to dive twice as deep. All of this is done not only without external oxygen supplies, but also with a bare minimum of accoutrements: just a pair of goggles with a bladder attached to adjust to the underwater pressure, a string bag to stuff their seabed booty in, and a triangular cotton *fundoshi* (loincloth) jokingly referred to as a *kuro-neko* (black cat). Only the women dive, while the men sit in the boats above, waiting to haul them up to the surface when they give a sharp few tugs on the ropes tied around their waists; and this is another factor that distinguishes *ama* communities. In a complete role reversal from the norm, it is the women who are out in the work sphere, there for everyone to see. The men used to dive in former times, but without their female counterparts' thicker layer of subcutaneous fat to protect them from the cold, they couldn't stay under water for so long, and as such were far less profitable and hence less important to the community.

The *ama* are virtually invisible today, their lifestyle and customs having all but died out, just as those of many traditional rural communities have in Japan. Events such as the *Ama Matsuri* (Ama Festival), still held every summer in Shirohama in Chiba prefecture, in which a shoal of tunic-wearing older *ama* swim around a large flaming shrine floating in the bay, seem to be staged primarily for tourists. In 1971, Luis Marden wrote that there were around 7000 *ama* in Japan, though by then the rot had already set in. Caught in the cross-tide between tradition and modernity, the younger generations abandoned the old ways of life as they were drawn to the cities to be swiftly assimilated into the new economic miracle. With pressure from rival fishing boats stripping the seabeds, the short season between May and early September in which it was warm enough for the *ama* to dive began to bear less and less fruit, and many took work during the long off-season months in fish canneries or as bar hostesses.

Hekura: The Diving Girls' Island makes for enlightening reading because it was written at a critical point in Japan's modernisation process when, in a few of the remoter outlying areas, the *ama* were still living the same lifestyle they had been enjoying for centuries. Ostensibly a travel journal peppered with facts and descriptions of the *ama*'s daily lives, it nonetheless suggests an interest that goes beyond the purely academic and demonstrates a lot about the West's

ongoing eroticisation of the East. Its main selling point was the glossy colour photos of its majestic maidens, referred to with such gleeful prose as "mythical sea goddesses", "children of Neptune, companions and handmaidens of Ulysses", "Valkyries of the sea with mahogany-coloured skins", "tall, assured, silent, earthenware-coloured, diving girls in their twenties, bare-breasted like goddesses".

We can to some extent forgive this mixture of scientific detachment, wide-eyed admiration and wistful romanticism. Maraini's book is clearly the product of a time when few Westerners were travelling to Japan, especially its remoter areas, and the nearest most Europeans had got to an *ama* was the famous series of woodblock prints by the eighteenth-century artist Utamarô. Many of the ideas he expresses may seem either charmingly naïve or obvious to the modern reader, as he forges a string of simple dichotomies between 'East' and 'West', 'primitive' and 'civilised', Shinto and Christianity. Side comments such as, "the Japanese rightly scorn our barbarous habit of living in great concrete boxes divided up into compartments in which people live detesting, or at best ignoring, one another" are bound to elicit a chuckle from anyone who has visited Tokyo in recent years.

But this was a time of vast societal change in Japan. Already the relatively isolated and undeveloped island community of Hekura sat in stark contrast to what he had found in an earlier trip to Toba village on the Honshû mainland. Here the *ama* girls worked on cultivated oyster beds, dressed in white cotton bathing-costumes issued by their employers, where they lined up for photos taken by weekend tourists from the big city. In Hekura, with the community unused to such foreign incursions, the old traditions still prevailed. It is intriguing that, though the village denizens are initially suspicious of Maraini and his entourage, treating them with a "polite aloofness", the barriers are eventually broken down, not by the sight of his Italian female assistant wandering through the village in the same state of candid undress as the locals (at Maraini's insistence), but by the research group offering the village elders the gift of a harpoon gun.

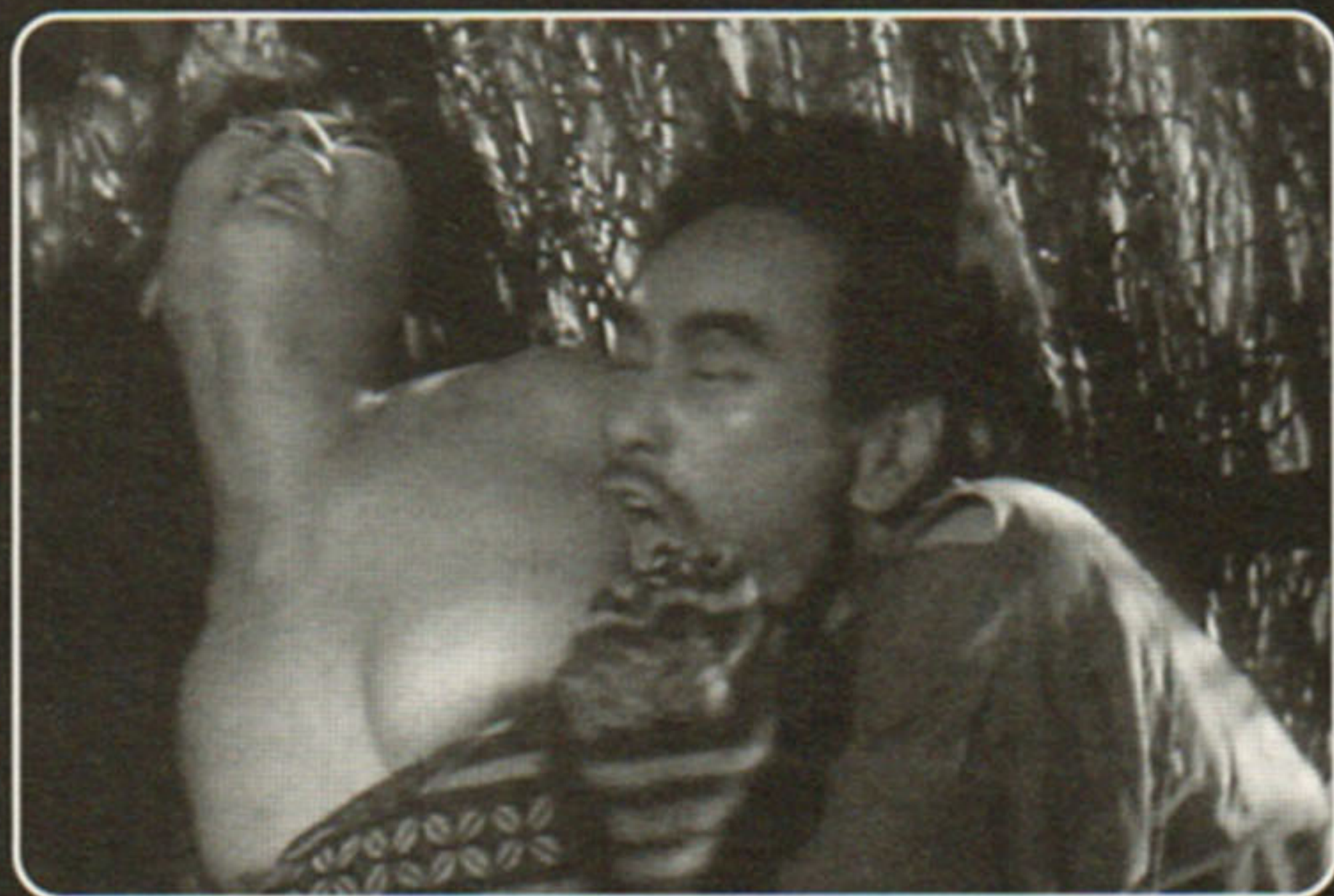
Surrounded by women going about their daily business quite unabashedly wearing nothing more than *fundoshi*, Maraini makes the following observation: "In the Far East, for instance, up to the first extensive contacts with the West, the human figure was always represented in art more or less clothed. Thus it can be said that in the East the nude is accepted in life but not in art, while in the West it is accepted in art but not in life." This suggests that the emergent class of metropolitan Japanese day-trippers peering through their viewfinders at the scantily-clad workers at the oyster beds of Toba were now aligning themselves with Western values, where the nude was treated as a source of stimulus of a purely sensual nature.

I use the word 'sensual' judiciously to blur the boundary between 'aesthetic' and 'erotic' that usually serves to delineate the spheres of Art and Pornography. In such debates, one can argue about artists' intentions and degrees of fidelity to the real thing until the cows come home, but ultimately what links paintings like Edouard Manet's *Olympia* to porn films such as *Deep Throat*, as well as both the tourist snapshots of the *ama* and Maraini's carefully composed ethnological portraits, is that they are all representations of the same thing – the female body. While it is difficult, in the highest sense of the word, to describe Shinto's *ama* films as 'Art' with a capital 'A', cinema is as much an art form as painting, photography and sculpture, and as such the subject is at the whim of those reconstructing it to provide an image that is often markedly different from its source.

Uninhibited and unrefined, dominant and athletic, and graced with a completely natural ambivalence towards their own nakedness as they glisten with sea spray in the waves, the popular conceptions of the *ama* lend themselves naturally to male fantasy. Like the majority of Maraini's still photographs, Shinto's films portray young, nubile and vital groups of women at work and at play. But they shy away from the more disagreeable fact that the most experienced and efficient of the *ama*, and the majority of those working today, are much older, many still diving until they are over 60. "Do you want the best or the prettiest?" asks Shirotsuki, the male head of the village fishermen in response to Maraini's request to find suitable photographic subjects. "Why? Can't the two things be combined?" "No, it's most unusual. The prettiest are the young ones, and they are hardly ever very skilful. The best are over thirty." Maraini later found the perfect combination of beauty and ability in the form of 18-year-old Taeko on the nearby island of Mikuria during his return voyage to the mainland.

Just as the scrawny figures of the more typical woman divers detracted from the romantic vision that Shinto were trying to promote, so too did the censorship climate of the time ensure that the filmic *ama* remained covered up in white cotton shifts in the same manner of those that Maraini had come across in the tourist spots of Honshû. Shinto's *ama* were already several steps removed from reality. Why not go the whole hog?

The first of the five films cited as belonging to Shinto's short-lived cycle of low-budget black and white program pictures did not, ironically, feature any *ama*, though the sinuous underwater diving scenes following the relocation of the action to a remote tropical island midway through set the agenda for the following films. Released in 1956, Toshio Shimura's *Revenge of the Pearl Queen* was in fact a bemusing crime thriller featuring the Amazonian form of pin-up girl Michiko Maeda.



above: Making waves: Michiko Maeda's unprecedented exposure in Toshio Shimura's 1956 film *Revenge of the Pearl Queen* represented a watershed in Japanese cinema.

Maeda plays the role of Natsuki, who lands herself in turbulent waters when Kizaki, her lover working for the same company, is framed by his corrupt boss Asamura for a murder and the theft of a large amount of money from the corporate safe. While at sea on a long business trip to America, Natsuki discovers the company president's active role in the crime and confronts him in his cabin. A violent struggle ensues in which Asamura ravishes Natsuki and pitches her overboard into the Pacific. With Kizaki arrested and the sole testifier to his guilt now believed to have sunk beneath the waves, Asamura looks sure to get away with his misdemeanour. Unluckily for him, Natsuki is washed up coughing and spluttering on a deserted island, where she is rescued by a ragged collection of shipwrecked sailors. Her salvation at first seems short-lived, as her provocative presence inflames passions amongst the red-blooded island internees, but against all odds, she manages to fend off their lecherous advances long enough to put her swimming skills to good use, scouring the surrounding reefs for pearls. By the time she is rescued, two years later, she has amassed a great fortune, which she puts to use in order to bring about her lover's release from prison and the downfall of those who put him there.

As might perhaps be gleaned from the above description, the storyline of Shimura's film bears more than a passing resemblance to that of a foreign co-production released but a few years previously, the final work of the Austrian director credited with launching the career Marlene Dietrich, Josef von Sternberg. Entitled *The Saga of Anatahan* (1953), yet known in Japan simply as *Anatahan*, it was filmed at Daiei's studios in Kyoto and told the reputedly true story of a group of Japanese soldiers marooned in the South Pacific oblivious to the fact that the war has ended, who discover that two other people also share their island, and one of them is a woman (played by Akemi Negishi). Naturally, it is this woman who emerges as Queen Bee, as the desperate men-folk end up systematically murdering one another in desperation for her favours. Given that *The Saga of Anatahan* is a far more highly-regarded entry in its director's filmography in Japan than it is anywhere else in the world, it therefore might be tempting, albeit a little cheeky, to posit von Sternberg as one of the mythic Ur-Fathers of the later emerging *eroduction* genre.

Like von Sternberg's film, *Revenge of the Pearl Queen* features a surprising amount of skin for its time, all of it belonging to Maeda. Anderson and Richie gave her their generous seal of approval as, "a star who consisted almost entirely of mammary glands."⁵⁷ Certainly Maeda more than adequately fills out the makeshift two-piece swimsuit in which she spends most of her time on the island before returning to Japan as the avenging femme fatale. Standing naked in the distance wringing out her clothes by the sea, or being chased across the dunes, her sarong scarcely covering her rear,

she is always the object of the viewer's gaze, and though things seldom get more steamy than shots of her bare back or thighs, the viewer is constantly placed in the same tantalising spectatorial position as the sex-starved sea dogs. In one scene of breathtaking brazenness, the taut cloth covering her bulging breasts slips down an inch to subliminally reveal the dark crest of a nipple as she is manhandled by one of the marooned mariners.

Michiko Maeda's groundbreaking appearance saw her immediately hoisted up as Shinto's poster girl and company delegate to a group known as the *nikutai-ha joyû*, or the 'Flesh Group Actresses'; the select club of glamour girls who dared to bare more than the rest and whose prominent billing on posters acted as a guarantee of the film's erotic allure. Every company sported their own representative: Yasuko Nakata at Toho; Kyôko Izumi at Shochiku; Mitsue Komiya at Daiei and main rival Hisako Tsukuba at Nikkatsu. In fact, Tsukuba appeared in a Nikkatsu production entitled *Reef of the Ama*, directed by Genjirô Morinaga in 1958, while Izumi also played a buxom girl diver in Masao Horiuchi's *Forbidden Sands* (1957).

However, Shinto were relatively slow to capitalise on the tumult caused by Maeda's sensational debut as a lead actress, and most of her following roles at the company were supporting ones, with Kiyoshi Komori's *Woman Race Track Magnate* in 1956 and Toshirô Ômi's *Dry Wife and Dominating Husband* in 1957 providing her only significant appearances before she left the movie world to embark on a career in television (though she much later received a prominent billing in Teruo Ishii's *Jigoku*, a digitally-shot pre-millennial reworking of the Nobuo Nakagawa horror classic.) There was, however, one major exception: Shinto's first bona fide *ama* movie, *The Girl Diver Trembles in Fear*.

Released the year after *Revenge of the Pearl Queen*, director Toshio Shimura returned to the helm, expanding the memorable 20-minute island sequence of the previous film to feature length, and capitalising on his main asset, the imposing spectacle of Maeda's slender glistening wet body squeezed into a tight bikini. The background plot is fairly rudimentary, as two local diving girls, Yuki and Chie, from a remote coastal village are kidnapped, during a visit to Tokyo, by a group of dubious looking types driving a flash car and sporting moustaches and panama hats. Their appearance in the village's social hub, the Ikari Inn, causes quite a stir, but not half as much as when Yuki's dead body is later found washed up on the shoreline. Fortunately, help is at hand in the form of a passing stranger, dressed in an immaculate sailor's outfit, named Shunsuke, who discovers the gangsters' hideout in a nearby cave. Here Chie is being held, bound and gagged, as a hostage until she can put her diving skills to good use to help recover a trove of riches hidden in the hull of a nearby sunken ship. Maeda played Chie's



above: Masayo Banri (left) and an unidentified girl diver tremble in fear, in Toshio Shimura's *The Girl Diver Trembles in Fear* (1957).

sister Yon, the female lead joining Shunsuke to pit their wits against the unwanted interlopers from the city.

While reprising the graceful underwater sequences of *Revenge of the Pearl Queen* (though similarly, it looks like a fish-tank has been superimposed over some of the shots), *Girl Diver Trembles in Fear* actually comes across as far tamer and less voyeuristic than its predecessor, with Maeda's dark, slinky vitality poorly served by her new backseat role, whose main plot function is to fall in love with the blandly-handsome male lead Ryûtarô Amagi. Nevertheless, it forged the template for what was to follow, with its sequences of girls bobbing about in the waves or rolling around in the sand locked in combat, and what became the cycle's most celebrated attraction: the sequences of girls duck-diving beneath the waves in formation and heading downwards to the ocean floor as if performers in an undersea ballet, their diaphanous smocks swirling with the currents to reveal surreptitious glimpses of bare breasts.

Shinto would find a suitably buxom replacement for Maeda in the form of Yôko Mihara, first appearing in Yoshiki Onoda's intriguingly-titled *Cannibal Ama* in 1958, a movie which unfortunately appears to be no longer with us. Still, it would appear that by the next entry the series had already sunk into simple repetition of its key elements. *Girl Divers at Spook Mansion* sees Mihara returning to her *ama* village where she lodges



above: All the usual elements found in Shintoho's girl diver films, this time in Morihei Magadani's *Girl Divers at Spook Mansion* (1959).

temporarily at the Aoyama residence, now reduced to one solitary occupant named Yumi after her elder brother fails to return from the sea one night. The Aoyama mansion comes laden with the Gothic trappings of secret panels, sinister servants, black cats springing out of dark corners and a hunchback loitering in the garden, while hushed voices talk of legendary treasure in an underwater cave and a mysterious black pearl. But the final straw is an apparition that periodically pops up to terrify Yumi every time she ventures too near to a bed or a bathtub.

The film begins with a delightfully schlocky credit sequence of posed shots of the *ama* girls covered in fishing nets, seated in lobster pots and clutching skulls, all unfolding in split screen to a suitably spooky score, which gives way to the familiar image of them frolicking in the waves before descending to the ocean floor, with the camera lingering on the flimsy white material clinging to their crotches. But from then on the film descends into monotony, and despite the supernatural expectations raised by its colourful title, it is actually the most boring of the lot. In true *Scooby Doo* fashion, the spook at the heart the film is soon revealed to be a ruse by a group of scheming ne'er-do-wells eager to get their hands on the loot and drive away all competition from the denizens of the *ama* village. The main point of interest lies in the appearance of Bunta Sugawara as the leading man; he would be cast alongside Mihara in several later films at Shintoho, including *Female Slave Ship*. Sugawara later became one of the country's most popular screen actors, most memorably in his yakuza roles in films by director Kinji Fukasaku during the '70s, like *Battles Without Honour and Humanity* and *Street Mobster*.



above: Shintoho glamour girl Yôko Mihara.

With so many scenes and plot elements rehashed from film to film, one might easily be led to believe that they were all shot back-to-back. However, the different crews and supporting casts and the time between their releases strongly suggests that this was not the case. By any measure, the reduced running times as the series progressed suggest that Shintocho at least were aware that the novelty was running out: the final film in the series clocked in at a succinct 56 minutes. Directed by Gorô Kadono, *Ghost Story: Phantom Ama* saw Mihara making way for Masayo Banri, an actress who had played supporting *ama* roles in several of the previous entries. The film begins strongly, with an atmospheric opening sequence, predating John Carpenter's *The Fog* by two decades, of shuffling ghost-like zombies, blood streaming from their faces, rising from the waves to drag the workers of a deserted shipyard, swirling with dry ice, to their doom. The ghosts' main target however is the village kingpin, and employer of the local diving girls, Satomura (played by Jûsaborô Akechi). When his wife and youngest daughter are abducted, it is up to his remaining daughter Namie (Banri) and her *ama* companions to get to the bottom of the mystery, which again revolves around sunken treasure and a gang of swarthy crooks.

Shintocho's peculiar sub-genre ended with the company's bankruptcy the very same year, with the costly commercial failure of Nobuo Nakagawa's opulent evocation of the torments of Buddhist hell, *Jigoku*, usually cited as the final straw. Released in exactly the same month as Nakagawa's film, the lack of funds available for *Phantom Ama* is evident. Still, never one to let a good thing go, producer Mitsugu Ôkura gave the *ama* movie another gasp in *The Mysterious Pearl of the Ama*, filmed in full-colour cinemascope at his new company Ôkura Eiga in 1963, and directed by Satoru Kobayashi, a man whose place in Japanese movie history is assured after shooting the first recognised pink film, *Flesh Market*. But more about both these two figures later.

The Ôkura-styled *ama* submerged for a while, though there were a number of other productions that featured *ama* characters over the next few decades, including Shochiku's *The Abalone Girls* (dir. Yôichi Maeda, 1965, starring the popular singer/actress Akiko Nakamura), in which "a tourist invasion on a small island off the Japanese mainland turns girl divers into geishas,"⁵⁸ and no less than five adaptations of Yukio Mishima's coastal-set novel *The Sound of Waves* (*Shiosai*), the most famous being the 1975 Toho version starring Momoe Yamaguchi.

In the meantime, prompted by the publication of Maraini's book, the exotic figure of these Japanese sea nymphs resurfaced in the West. The first traces of these women in Western cinema seem to be in a 1961 German documentary on Japan



above: The new girl diver in town, Masayo Banri.



entitled *Moshi Moshi – Hallo Japan* (1961). However, the earliest title to feature *ama* that is readily available for viewing now is *Violated Paradise*, an Italian production released in 1963. Directed by Marion Gering, a Russian émigré who had once been able to boast of a pretty reputable Hollywood career (he worked there during the '30s), it was based directly on Maraini's *Meeting with Japan*, and surely counts as one of the more bizarre Western treatises on Japanese culture to have survived to the present day.

The narrative focus of this long-forgotten oddity is Tamako, played by Kazuko Mine. The primary function of her character, a young half-Japanese, half-Ainu born and bred in the northernmost frontier of Hokkaido, is to lead the viewer on an hour-long trip across the country and into the seething under-girth of Tokyo by night as she goes in search of work. Filmed completely without sound, her cod-oriental intonations are provided by an actress known as Paulette Girard, who articulates a variety of Maraini's oft-rehearsed tenets. "For the Japanese, nakedness is next to godliness," she opines as she reaches her first port-of-call, *ama* village, and bearing in mind the classic screenwriting adage, 'show, don't tell' Gering does just that, with scenes of the girls baring their torsos to the sun accompanied by an abridged account of Japan's creation myth ("Izanami thrust his spear into the murky depths"). Here Tamako encounters a male villager, Kosunari, but heartbreak has already set in before the end of the first reel, as her quest for employment drives her further south, down to Tokyo.

In the city, Girard's sham stream of consciousness is drowned out by the traditional 'Voice of God' narration of Thomas L. Rowe, who heralds our arrival with the unforgettable line, "Tokyo, crossroads of the East, city of 39 races, 30 styles of cookery, and 56 ways of making love, of 82 basic odours and 80,000 stinks, of 12 kinds of dirt and 34 vices." Following Rowe's authoritative introduction to the world of *Geisha* and all its different delineations ("This type sometimes does; seldom doesn't..."), lengthy documentary footage ensues of assorted cabaret dancers, strippers and bar hostesses, forewarning us of the exact nature of employment that



awaits a young innocent such as Tamako. After a near loss of virtue following a brush with one of her clients during a stint working as a bar hostess ("the fifth generation of Geisha"), she sensibly hops on the next train down to Atami, where she takes a job at a hot spring resort. Here she is reacquainted with Kosunari, and before too long they are happily wedded and back in *ama* village.

Entertaining as it is, Gering's film is dominated by the hectoring tone of Maraini's original arguments, with its positing of Japan as a primitive paradise contaminated by what he sees as a peculiarly Western form of sexual commodification in which the film itself is quite unabashedly complicit. But *Violated Paradise* nevertheless stands as a fascinating visual document of a city in the midst of major transition, and comes crammed with vibrant scenes of local colour. More than that, the sequences set in the unspecified *ama* village clear up the mystery of what happened to the footage Maraini captured during his stay in Hekura, and it is worth the price of admission just to see the incredibly rare authentic underwater shots of the *ama* girls at work, who are clearly the same subjects as those who posed for the photos in *Hekura: The Diving Girls' Island*.

Ama glamour remained in at least partial vogue throughout the '60s. A few brief snippets of footage of fully-clothed diving girls at work were included in *Women of the World* (*La donna nel mondo*, 1963), a sensationalist documentary constructed in the same vein by fellow Italians Gualtiero Jacopetti and Franco Prosperi that followed their seminal *Mondo cane* (1962), while in their most famous appearance, Mie Hama's bikini-ed *ama* villager led the charge to Blofeld's lair, secreted beneath a volcano, with Tiger Tanaka's troop of ninjas in tow in the Roald Dahl-penned Bond movie *You Only Live Twice* (Lewis Gilbert, 1967).

The *ama* had not quite yet vacated their role in Japanese erotic cinema however. The shapely forms were to air once more in a string of titles in the '70s, made as part of Nikkatsu's Roman Porno range. With a huge lapse in censorship standards allowing these ripe-bosomed beauties to be displayed with a naked vigour that would have made even Maraini blush, the company embarked on a string of innuendo-laden titles that included *Secret Ama Report: Unrequited Lust* (1975), *Lusty Ama: Stirred-Up Pot* (1976), *Night-Crawling Ama* (1977), *Lusty Ama: Loincloth Festival* (1981), *Marked Ama: Stirred-Up Shell* (1982) and *Mighty Ama: Tightly-Closed Shell* (1985).

While Shintocho had gone down the road of ghostly shivers and cut-price action sequences in their pulpy programmers, Nikkatsu's more naturalistic approach took full advantage of the habitat of the outlying coastal communities in which the lissom *awabi* harvesters are the stronger members and the men mere drunken slobs, to depict its female inhabitants in all their raw and savage splendour. A typical work from



above: Masayo Banri.

opposite top: Scenes of *ama* at work feature in the obscure German mondo movie *Moshi Moshi - Hallo Japan* (1961).

1979, *Clam-Diving Ama* sees crop-haired Saki (Akiko Hyûga) subsidising her diving with evening work as a barmaid at the local *izakaya*. Saki is the object of many a local stare, especially with her hot-headed trucker husband Seiichi spending long periods away from home on the road. Her brother-in-law, Tamao, is but one of the many men in her orbit smitten by her charms, and in his daily role of looking after affairs on deck while she is gathering shellfish from the deep, he spends rather more time in her company than is perhaps good for him, attracting the taunts and jibes of the other *ama* girls in the community in the process. When Seiichi is killed in a traffic accident and a young girl named Moyoko (Yuki Yoshizawa) arrives at his funeral pregnant with his child, Tamao is right at hand to provide a shoulder to cry on.

Devoid of the hypnotic underwater sequences that made Shintocho's films so outstanding, the *ama* milieu here provides the raw material for a more character-driven drama than might be expected, with Saki spending a good deal more time in the bedroom than at the seabed. The hot summer seaside setting is instead livened up with some kinky games involving pachinko balls and the queasy spectacle of an abalone squirming in Saki's boat during a bout of on-deck lovemaking.

Things had certainly come a long way in a relatively short time since Maraini's first meeting with Japan. But there were still deeper, darker depths to be plumbed, and from the '60s onwards the country's leading sexploitation practitioners no longer needed any cues from Westerners to point them to the sensual pleasures right there on their doorsteps.

Footnotes

48 Ōshima, Nagisa. *Cinema, Censorship and the State: The Writings of Nagisa Oshima*. Cambridge: MIT, 1992: 12.

49 Arthur Knight's rather uncharitable and factually inaccurate assessment of the state of the industry in *The Liveliest Art: A Panoramic History of the Movies* (New York: Mentor Books, 1957) pretty much sums up the thinking of the time: "Until Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon* won the Grand Prize at the Venice Film Festival in 1951, it was generally assumed that the industry in Japan – like the studios in India or Egypt – simply turned out great quantities of films of dubious merit and purely local interest. Although pictures had been made there since 1904, almost since the time that movies started, few had been seen by the Western World and none had roused any particular enthusiasm. In fact, not until the '30s, when Japan began her campaigns of conquest in the Orient, was there an industry of any size. As so often happens, the films followed the flag. Through wars and economic penetration, Japan had captured for herself a vast potential audience in China, Manchuria, Indochina and Korea, a market long dominated by the European and Hollywood studios. With their particular gift for cheap imitation, the Japanese were soon turning out between seven and eight hundred films a year – mostly pseudo-French romances or American-style crime and action pictures. Through this flood of films,

they effectively ousted or undersold all competitors in the Far East, a market that Japan controls to this day." I wish to thank William Drew for drawing my attention to this quote.

50 Anderson, Joseph L. and Richie, Donald. *The Japanese Film: Art and Industry*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982: 256.

51 For more information about the Toho labour strikes, the "Red Purges" of the film industry, and the US Occupation's role in them, see Hirano, Kyoko. *Mr. Smith Goes to Tokyo: Japanese Cinema Under the American Occupation 1945-1952*.

52 Anderson, Joseph L. and Richie, Donald: 250. The authors point out the irony that at the time Ōkura already had a few failed business ventures behind him.

53 Shintarō Ishihara later became Governor of Tokyo, often courting controversy with his outspoken views, while his brother Yûjirō, on the back of his brief appearance in *Season of the Sun*, launched a successful acting career beginning at Nikkatsu Studios that lasted up until his premature death of liver cancer in 1987.

54 Kuwahara, Ietoshi. *Kirareta waisetsu: Eirin katto-shi*. Tokyo: Yomiuri shinbunsha, 1993: 42.

55 Not to be confused with the homophonic word meaning a nun, spelt with a different kanji character than the two characters, *umi* (sea) and *onna* (woman) used to spell this word.

56 Macias, Patrick. *TokyoScope: The Japanese Cult Film Companion*. San Francisco: Cadence, 2001: 173-174. "The Ōkura-produced *Ama* (female diver) films, inspired by earthy Italian neorealist films like 1948's *Riso amaro* (*Bitter Rice*), tempted folks into theatres with the promise they would show everything. But no actual nudity was on display: audiences had to be content with the decidedly mixed message about the dignity of hardworking Japanese women and the wet actresses in white formfitting outfits."

57 Anderson, Joseph L. and Richie, Donald. pg 267.

58 "Melodramas from Japan." *Continental Film Review* January 1968: 20.



above: Akiko Hyûga gets carried away in Shinichi Shiratori's *Clam-Diving Ama* (1979), one of a number of innuendo-laden Roman Porno titles that reworked the girl diver milieu for a new generation. ©Nikkatsu Corporation

The Birth of the Eroproduction

The story of Japanese cinema is as much that of its studios and the company presidents and producers who steered their courses as it is of the directors who served as their employees. During the '60s this relationship became more complex, as the monopoly of the Big Six started to break down. This slow erosion of the traditional production system was matched by an explosive growth in the independent sector, as new avenues for exhibition sprang up across the country and disenchanted directors left the majors to form their own companies. The movies of these spirited young filmmakers reflected their newly-found autonomy from past filmmaking practices; they were more dynamic, more political and more in touch with the younger generation. And part of the appeal of many of them in no small measure boiled down to sex.

The 1950s had seen the significant insinuation of a Western-inspired form of glamour, desire and carnality into the auditorium. Cinema, the most popular form of family entertainment during the post-war period, was rapidly becoming a young person's game, as old-school values were wafted aside in a new breed of movies portraying hedonistic, rebellious youths on the rampage, similar to American films like Laslo Benedek's *The Wild One* (1954) starring Marlon Brando, Nicholas Ray's *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955, featuring James Dean in his most celebrated role), and Richard Brooks's *Blackboard Jungle* (1955).

At first these Japanese *seishun eiga*, or youth movies, were driven at a popular level by the *taiyôzoku* ('sun tribe') films, instigated by two adaptations of novels by Shintarô Ishihara, who in his new guise as a politician (and the Governor of Tokyo since 1999) would later court controversy on the wider international stage with his outspoken right-wing views. The movies in question were Takumi Furukawa's *Season of the Sun*, a beach movie which sparked off an instant cult of celebrity around the author's younger, cooler brother Yûjirô, who appeared in a small cameo, and Kô Nakahira's *Crazed Fruit*, which put the handsome star in his first leading role, in a tale about a teenage girl running riot in a tranquil beach resort. Both films were released by Nikkatsu in 1956, the same year that Daiei brought another, similarly-themed, Ishihara novel to the screen with the Kon Ichikawa-directed *Punishment Room*.

Most of the majors reacted in their own way to the new *taiyôzoku* craze, but some more dramatically than others. During 1956-58, Shochiku's 'Ofuna-flavour' family movies – named after the studios near the town of Kamakura where they were made – were coming under criticism as being distinctly old-fashioned. Young people wanted stories that reflected their changing

world, not conservative home dramas about the lower-middle classes or sentimental weepies about the hardships of post-war Japan, such as the films championed by Shochiku's president Shirô Kido and made by Yasujirô Ozu or Keisuke Kinoshita. Eager not to be left behind, the company gave the green light for three new directors to make their debuts while still under the age of 30: Masahiro Shinoda, Kijû Yoshida (his name can also be read as Yoshishige) and Nagisa Ôshima. These three would all become major figures over the next decade as part of a filmmaking movement that was termed by critics as the Japanese New Wave, or *nûberu bâgu*, with Ôshima acting as the main ambassador for a collection of filmmakers who challenged the status quo with their avant-garde mixing of pop culture and politics and their self-conscious positioning outside of the commercial mainstream. Though the Shochiku Nouvelle Vague label essentially began as a brand name developed by the company itself, it has been taken by some writers to refer to directors leading broader trends and changes within the country's filmmaking scene. Borrowed from the French term, the directors often seen as assembled under this collective banner were not so much consciously echoing Godard, Truffaut and their ilk, nor the synchronous movement in the United Kingdom made up, among others, of Lindsay Anderson, Karel Reisz and Tony Richardson, but reacting to their own specific changing social and production circumstances within Japan.⁵⁹

In an article written in 1958, entitled "Is It a Breakthrough? (The Modernists of Japanese Film)", Ôshima had said of *Crazed Fruit*, "In the rip of a skirt and the buzz of a motorboat, sensible people heard the heralding of a new generation of Japanese film."⁶⁰ He went on to sing the praises of *Kisses* (1957), the debut film of Yasuzô Masumura at Daiei. Masumura's film took its action away from the studio onto the bristling streets of Tokyo, using a free-moving camera technique that lent its story of two motorbike-riding lovers an unforgettably edgy tone. Masumura was just one of the first of this new breed that Ôshima saw as marked with a "determination to create works that break with the traditions of premodern Japanese film", a determination that he himself would manifest with his own 1959 debut, *A Town of Love and Hope*.

Ôshima's film told the tale of Masao, a teenager from an impoverished background who, when his mother falls sick, is forced into bringing in the family income through the ruse of selling pigeons that have an unerring ability to find their way back to his home so they can be sold again. One such scam brings him into

contact with the other side of the social divide when Kyôko, the daughter of an electrical appliance factory owner, buys one as a gift for her brother. Shot in monochrome and using real-life locations in Tokyo's slum areas to address such issues as the unequal distribution of wealth and opportunities afforded to certain sectors of the population, Ôshima's film shifted the traditional focus of Shochiku to social rather than domestic dramas. As David Desser points out, Ôshima's debut more closely resembled the films of the Angry Young Men movement in Britain than the Sun Tribe movies.⁶¹ His next two titles, both shot in colour, adhered more closely to the *taiyôzoku* formula, yet adopted an even more overtly political stance. *Cruel Story of Youth* is set in the fervid world of student revolutionaries, young thrill-seekers, gangsters and back-street abortions. Its incendiary depiction of its lowlife milieu established a link between youth, sex, violence and politics that, as Desser asserts, was "the essence of the New Wave and the essence of the '60s." Crucially, it also became the essence of many a pink film, especially those of Kôji Wakamatsu, whose links with radical left-wing political movements and his later association with Ôshima we shall soon be looking at more thoroughly.

The *taiyôzoku* movies proved a highly influential but ultimately short-lived fad that was all but over by the tail end of the '50s, as Ôshima himself perhaps ironically hinted at with the title of his third movie, *The Sun's Burial*, released in 1960. It was time for the industry to move on, but unfortunately the filmmakers seemed far more eager to break the mould than the studios. Ôshima's fourth film, *Night and Fog in Japan* (1960), took its critique of the same year's newly-revised Japan-US Security Treaty (or Anpo Agreement) that one step too far. The pact allowed, barely a decade after the end of the occupation, US forces to remain on Japanese soil under the pretext of protecting the country from the threat of communism in South East Asia. Ôshima's film is set during the wedding of two young student radicals in the aftermath of the violent protests that unfolded in Tokyo during the signing of the treaty, but rather than toasting the happy future of the newlyweds, the guests' speeches immediately take the form of long political tirades and heartfelt recriminations about the sincerity of each others' involvement in the demonstration. Shochiku pulled the film mere days after its release, claiming such unconventional material was not what audiences wanted from a night at the movies. They probably had a point: to the modern viewer the film seems overbearingly pompous and theatrical, unfolding almost entirely on a single set with Brechtian flashbacks against a plain black background to highlight its political message. Righteously feeling that his creative voice had been stifled, Ôshima left the studios acrimoniously. He moved to television for the next few years before setting up his own independent production house,

Sôzôsha, through which he continued to make a string of highly innovative and challenging works that were to influence an entire generation.

Ôshima never worked in the pink industry, though as we shall see he did brush shoulders with this world on several occasions. What his particular case serves to illustrate, however, is the way in which the established vertical system of production and exhibition through the studios' own theatrical networks was being challenged due to the efforts of a small group of individuals. Symptomatic of the manner in which exhibition opened up to new cinematic possibilities was the establishment of the Art Theatre Guild, or ATG. Prior to its foundation in 1961, there had been no significant outlet in Japan for experimental or artistic releases from any part of the world, yet alone domestic productions. Because of the existence of import quotas, foreign art film was rare, and distributors only selected films that would be fairly safe bets. In 1962, ATG established a small chain of ten cinemas across the country for just this purpose, including their flagship venue, Art Theatre Shinjuku Bunka, which also became a major centre for experimental performance art and contributed to Shinjuku's status as the main centre for Tokyo's avant-garde arts scene in the '60s.

ATG's first release was the Polish film *Mother Joan of the Angels* (1961), and it was followed by a host of similarly uncommercial foreign titles, both recent – such as Jean Cocteau's *Le testament d'Orphée* (1960), Ingmar Bergman's *Wild Strawberries* (1957), Luis Buñuel's *Viridiana* (1961) and John Cassavetes's *Shadows* (1959) – and older ones like Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), *Alexander Nevsky* (1938) and *Ivan the Terrible* (1944). ATG also screened ambitious Japanese independent productions, including Hiroshi Teshigahara's *Pitfall* (1962), Kaneto Shindô's *The Man* (1962), Susumu Hani's *She and He* (1963), and later several of Nagisa Ôshima's works. But the most critical impact ATG had on the Japanese theatrical landscape from the early '60s onwards was through its role in producing or co-producing dozens of some of the most interesting Japanese films of the next few decades: titles such as Shôhei Imamura's *A Man Vanishes* (1967), Ôshima's *Death By Hanging* (1968) and *Boy* (1969), and Kazuo Kuroki's *Evil Spirits of Japan* (1970), all the way up to Sôgo Ishii's *Crazy Family* (1984), Jûzô Itami's *The Funeral* (1984), and Nobuhiko Ôbayashi's *Bound for the Fields, the Mountains and the Seacoast* (1986).⁶²

ATG might not immediately seem relevant to discussions of the genesis and evolution of the *eroduction*, though their films often did feature nudity and adult subject matter. What the case of ATG does highlight, however, is the backdrop against which independent producers and directors came to carve out a significant niche in a market that had long been in the firm grip of the major studios. Both the *eroduction* producers and ATG offered audiences a chance to see

the type of film that had never really been seen before in Japan, representing a two-pronged assault of art and exploitation against a mainstream sector whose basis was in the family market.

Nevertheless, ATG's championing of the less-commercial ventures was not without major studio support. The greatest part of ATG's founding capital came from Toho, so it's more accurate to view its emergence as a sign of the majors adjusting to a new cultural climate than thinking of these art films as being in opposition to the mainstream. In other words, this new alternative cinematic subculture was essentially industry-sponsored. Furthermore, it owed much of its overseas exposure to the efforts of the married couple Nagamasa and Kashiko Kawakita who, from prior to the war onwards, had become the main agents in promoting Japanese cinema abroad through their agency named the Tôwa Trading Partnership, and later formed a close partnership with Toho. When Nagamasa died, the Japan Film Library Council which he had founded – an archive of films intended to foster an understanding of Japanese culture abroad through the medium of cinema – became the Kawakita Memorial Film Institute, which is still active to this day.⁶³

ATG did later produce works directed by figures hailing from the exploitation genres of the pink film and Nikkatsu's Roman Porno, with Kôji Wakamatsu's *Ecstasy of the Angels* (1972) and *Eros Eterna* (1977), and Banmei Takahashi's *Tattoo* (1982) representing the pink sector, and *Case of the Disjointed Murder* (1977) and *Youth Part 2* (1979) offering two sojourns from Nikkatsu studios for directors Chûsei Sone and Kôyû Ohara respectively. But by and large, as Wakamatsu pointed out, during the '60s, "ATG was a kind of elite to which I didn't belong... Even though ATG was showing art films, they were not really interested in minor films. At that time, Nikkatsu produced action movies with new stars such as Yûjirô Ishihara and Akira Kobayashi, and many of them were artistically quite ambitious. I wanted to make films like that, films that reflected my thoughts and likings. Later the films were called *pink eiga*, but at the time they were just called *dokuritsu eiga* or 'independent films'."⁶⁴

And so, as one side of the new production environment saw itself widely hailed internationally, the other remained hidden in the shadows of critical neglect. While this was hardly a hindrance in commercial terms to the makers of the immediately popular *eroduction* movies, it has resulted in an obfuscation in overseas understanding about a sector of the market that would, in truth, sustain the industry over the next few decades, and indeed a sector that was far more dynamic and interesting than it was ever given credit for at the time.

The prevailing increase in youthful subject matter at so many levels in Japanese cinema was not solely down to the efforts of a breakaway group of scripters and directors catering for a new post-war generation who

had come of age. It was also a reaction to broader demographic shifts that were threatening to dismantle cinema's traditional family market. Television was held solely responsible for this huge downward shift in cinema-going. By 1965, the new technology had infiltrated 60% of the nation's homes, a figure that would rise to 95% by 1970. This was matched by a correlative drop in cinema attendances, from 1,127 million in 1958 to 1,014 million in 1960. The figure dramatically plunged even further, to almost a third of this in 1965, at 373 million, and the downturn continued into the next decade, where it stabilised at a mere 174 million in 1975. Even though production as a whole hit a record high in 1960, with a grand total of 547 titles made, by 1962 the output of the majors had dropped by 30%.⁶⁵

All of the major studios felt the pinch, but Shintocho was to fall at the first hurdle. Nobuo Nakagawa's *Jigoku* had gone way over budget, with the director sinking his own money into the production to realise his ambitious vision of hell's infernal torments, yet the resulting film failed to make sufficient box office returns when it was released. Shintocho managed to weather the storm for a further few months, in which time a number of other pictures were released, including Nakagawa's final film at the company, *Kaa-chan*, a grimy depiction of family hardship in occupied Tokyo. But by this time the company's downturn was irreversible.



above: "Agony Tears Mad Image Drama!" the posters scream out for this film called *Sexual Violence*, directed by Toshio Okuwaki and released in 1968.

成人映画 36

巻末付録 *ピンク女優全調査名鑑



above: Sixties glamour girl Ayako Hitomi graces the cover of *Seijin Eiga* magazine, aimed at the more discerning *eroduction* viewer.

When Shintoho fell in May 1961, as if from a hydra's severed head, up sprang two new companies to take its place. The first of these was founded a mere couple of months after Shintoho's bankruptcy by its former president, Mitsugu Ôkura. In the previous decade Ôkura had proven his mogul credentials as someone with an eye keenly on the lower end of the market. While many of Shintoho's earlier directors either moved on to television or found employment with other companies such as Toho, a few stayed on alongside him to oversee the kind of lowly hack work that had originally proven Shintoho's bread and butter. To this aim, Ôkura used his own company, Fuji Eiga, to buy up Shintoho's second studios in Tokyo's Setagaya district, and began production. Distribution was arranged through the chain of theatres he owned as part of a separate business concern. He named this new company, quite simply, Ôkura Eiga.

Though few of Ôkura's early films are available for viewing, the titles suggest a continuation of the more exploitative genres of gang movies, ghost stories and prison dramas with which Shintoho had originally carved out its niche. Ôkura was able to capitalise on the decreasing number of films produced by the majors as many theatres, especially those in the outlying provincial areas, were no longer able to fill their double (*nihontate*) or triple bills (*sanbontate*), so were crying out for supporting works to fill their schedules. He also started

introducing what was known as *yô-pin*, or foreign-produced erotic films, into Japanese cinemas at this time, though it is not exactly clear what these titles were.

Meanwhile, across the other side of the country, a young man named Kôichi Gotô, originally a Shintoho employee based in the company's Kansai sales office in Osaka, bought the name of the company in a rather complicated arrangement that saw Shintoho's back catalogue ending up in the hands of a company named Kokusai Hôei (International Television Films Inc.), and the remaining business holdings divided into three sections based in Tokyo, Kansai and Nagoya. In 1964, when he was only 33, Gotô borrowed money to purchase the management rights of the Kansai section, which he renamed and started afresh as Shintoho Kôgyô (Shintoho Entertainment) to differentiate from the company's original name of Shintoho Kabushikigaisha (Shintoho Corporation). The new company initially continued screening those Shintoho films produced by Ôkura that were still awaiting release at the time of the bankruptcy. The Tokyo branch was renamed Tokyo Kôei (Tokyo Entertainment Pictures), and began work producing and distributing pink films. Later, in 1972, Shintoho Kôgyô relocated to the capital and absorbed Tokyo Kôei to become Shintoho Eiga, under which name it still operates today.

The pink film genre had its birth in 1962 with the release of *Flesh Market*, directed by Satoru Kobayashi, one of the filmmakers who had followed Ôkura from the original Shintoho. Born 1 August, 1930, Kobayashi had left his home in Nagano, where his family ran a hot spring resort hotel, for Tokyo where he studied theatre at Waseda University. For a while he was heavily involved in the worlds of theatre and Butoh, a modern school of dance that melded traditional Japanese forms with Western influences, and while at university he began writing criticism and working on stage set design. He entered Shintoho in 1954 and started working as an assistant director for such notable names as Hiroshi Shimizu, Teruo Ishii and Japan's first female director, Kinuyo Tanaka, best known for her work as an actress, particularly in the films of Kenji Mizoguchi. Kobayashi made his debut in 1959 with the luridly-titled *Mad Lust*, and made a further ten works with titles such as *Dangerous Temptation* (1960), *Three Women Burglars* (1960), and *Phantom Detective: Terrifying Alien* (1960), before Shintoho's collapse.

Despite the unambitious nature of much of his oeuvre, Kobayashi's place in Japanese film history is assured if only due to *Flesh Market*. Though the term had yet to be coined, it is considered by Japanese film historians to be the first pink film. Within two days of its opening, its run was stopped by the Metropolitan Police, who seized all the prints and the original negative in the first incident of its kind since the war. According to the film's Chief Assistant Director, Kinya Ogawa, the enterprising producers immediately reassembled a new version from the rushes and leftover footage, minus a

few of the more offensive scenes, and put this out in its stead.⁶⁶ The film was immediately profitable considering the tiny resources on which it was made (a mere ¥6 million at a time when the average studio production was ¥40-50 million),⁶⁷ no doubt due to the huge amount of copy the incident inspired in the national press. The term *eroduction* was immediately coined to describe this emerging strain of minuscule-budget exploitation cinema of the type that Ôkura would increasingly specialise in, especially after the costly failure of Kiyoshi Komori's war epic *The Pacific War and the Star Lily Corps* (1962), about the group of hospital nurses stationed in Okinawa, the *Himeyuri Butai*, and their role in the suicidal final battle against the Americans at the end of the war.

It is impossible to say whether Kobayashi's landmark film lives up to its historical legacy, as only a 21-minute fragment of the film remains locked away in the archives of the National Film Centre. According to written synopses, the story concerned a 17-year-old girl (played by Tamaki Katori, who we can thus count as the first ever star of the pink film), whose investigation into the mysterious suicide of her elder sister in the Westernised enclave of Tokyo's Roppongi district brings her into the clutches of a group of criminal lowlifes.⁶⁸

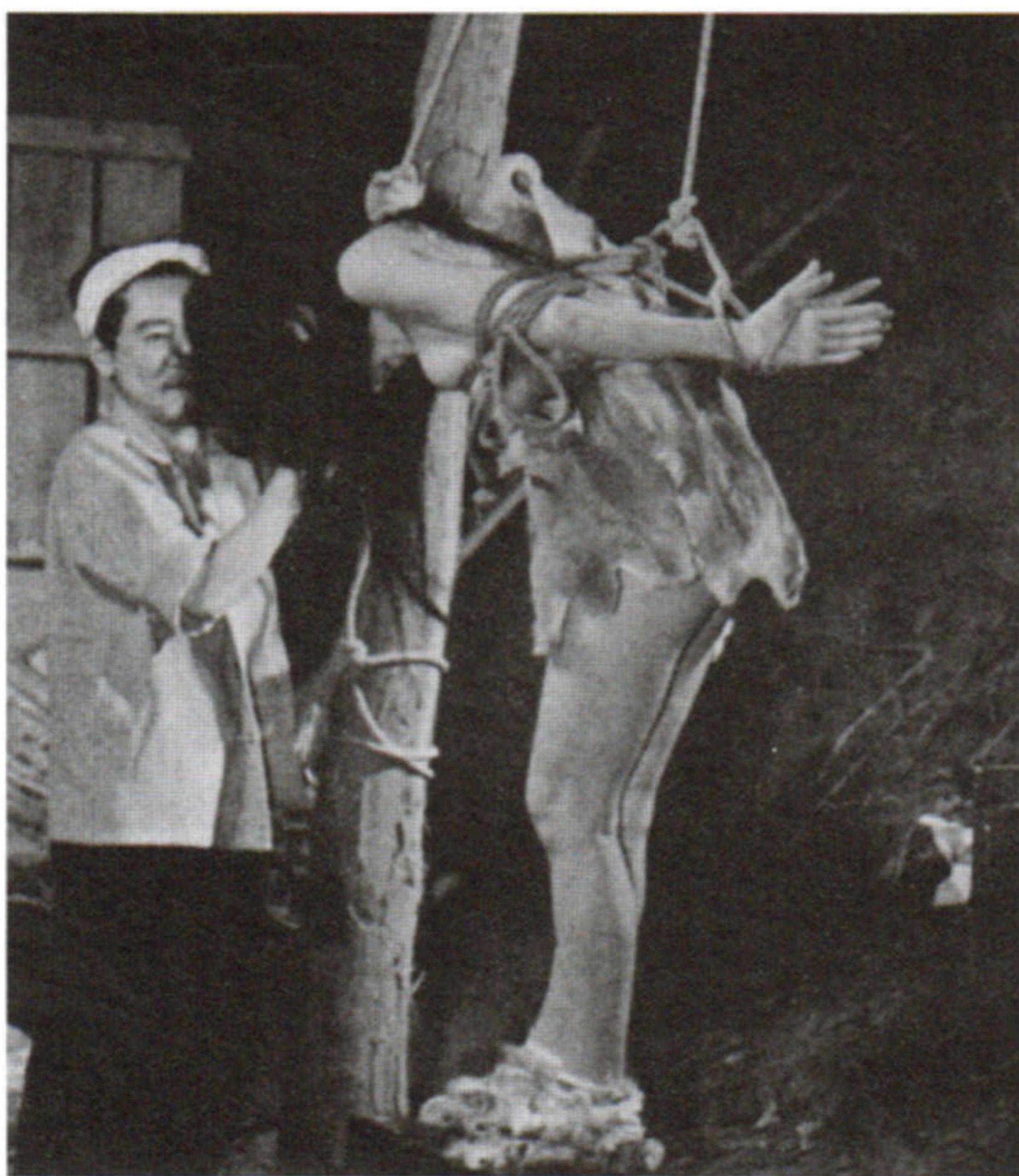
The surviving fragments of *Flesh Market* at least represent 21 minutes more than what remains of most of the pink films produced in the '60s, whose prints were either junked immediately once they'd outlived their usefulness or subsequently wore away to nothing through repeated projection.⁶⁹ Outside of the works of Kôji Wakamatsu and his colleagues, produced at his own company Wakamatsu Pro – thus allowing the director himself to take care of the original prints and negatives – only about a dozen or so films from this first decade have been released on video in Japan, mostly on the Hummingbird label. Interestingly, a number of pink films long forgotten in Japan have survived in various subbed or dubbed edits solely because they were distributed overseas. The catalogue of the Something Weird label in the US includes a number of such titles not listed in the holdings of the National Film Centre archive, including Tetsuji Takechi's *Daydream* (1964), Seiichi Fukuda's *Boneless* (1967) and Toshio Okuwaki's *Naked Pursuit* (1968). Because of this, much of the knowledge about the early *eroductions* comes from textual sources like the magazine *Seijin Eiga* ('Adult Films') which, between the years 1965-73, enjoyed a glorious reign as the primary source of information on the pink film (surprisingly, given its subject matter and its approach to it, *Seijin Eiga* was actually edited by a woman, Nobuko Kawashima), or the annual reference volumes published by Gendai Eiga Kenkyûkai ('The modern film research association'), like *Kono 12 nenkan no fûzoku eiga shûtaijô* ('These 12 Years of Sex Films Compendium') or *Nihon sekushii eiga zenshû* ('Japanese Sexy Films Complete Works'), which list all releases in a given year.

Flesh Market was one of four such *eroductions* to be made during the genre's first year. One of the others came from a rather more unlikely source. Sojiro Motogi had been a major power at Toho studios from the end of the war onwards, and in the capacity of a producer was behind many classic titles from the '50s, including a number of Akira Kurosawa's most famous, such as *Ikiru* and *Seven Samurai*. In 1962, Motogi made *Free Trade in Flesh* and continued directing a further hundred or so films in the pink genre under a number of pseudonyms, the most common of which was Takeo Takagi, for companies which included Ôkura Eiga, Cine Unimonde, G Pro and Million Film. His movies had titles like *Women: Three Hundred and Sixty Five Nights* (1966), *Devilish Married Woman* (1966), *Girl University Student: Virgin Play* (1968), *Peeping Heaven* (1974), and *Sensual College Girl: I Want to Give It to You!* (1977).

After just a few years, the output of the *eroduction* companies rocketed: twenty four such films were produced in 1963; sixty five in 1964; and two hundred and thirteen in its peak year of 1965, after which the figure dropped off slightly.⁷⁰ In this free-for-all hungry market, the companies that made them proliferated, split, merged, renamed and occasionally disappeared overnight at a rate that is virtually impossible to track (which may well have been their aim, so as to shield the activities of those involved from the taxman). Some of the more prominent names from this first decade are Nihon Cinema, Aoi Eiga, KPC, Roppô Eiga, Kantô Film Distribution (*Kantô Eihai*), Kantô Movie (*Kantô Mûbi*), World Eiga and Hôei. But of all these the most significant to emerge, at least from today's perspective, was Kokuei. Alongside Shintohe and Ôkura Eiga, it is the only survivor from this first decade, and in fact the company predates the arrival of the genre by several years.



above: Tetsuji Takechi's legendary *Daydream* (1964) owes its reputation and its survival to its wide-circulation overseas.
(courtesy of Something Weird Video Inc. and Box Office International Pictures)



Founded in 1955 by Teruo Yamoto, a former post-office employee, Kokuei initially made films for the Ministry of Education (the company's name means 'National Pictures'). According to its current president, Daisuke Asakura, the company first discovered how profitable sex films could be when it, "happened to come across some short films from abroad and ran them on a double bill with Toei and Shochiku. They were huge hits. There wasn't anything like them in Japan back then." These shorts were the same imported recordings of live strip shows, or *shô eiga*, referred to in chapter 2, and they proved a major cash cow for the company from around 1957 onwards.

In 1963, Kokuei made their first contribution to the newly burgeoning *eroduction* scene with *Valley of Lust*. Nothing survives of this intriguing-sounding film, nor its sequel, *Cave of Lust*, bar a handful of publicity stills, but the subject matter seems to be something of an oddity compared with other works of its time. As Asakura recalls, "Full nudity was out of the question at the time, so we had to do semi-nude. The question was, how to make a woman semi-nude?" The solution was these 'Female Tarzan' movies. They featured a topless lead (Kazuko Mine in the first film), the sole human amongst a cast of bears, monkeys and other

assorted wildlife. The two films were both directed by the former TV director Kôji Seki, reportedly hired for his experience in filming animals for children's nature documentaries. His new employment saw him embark on a completely new career trajectory. Seki was up to his neck in pink production until 1985, and he was not alone. This was a world that proved tricky to break out of once you were in.

Footnotes

- 59 Desser, David. *Eros Plus Massacre: An Introduction to the Japanese New Wave Cinema*. Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1988. pg 4.
- 60 Ôshima, Nagisa. *Cinema, Censorship and the State*. pg 26-35. Translated from the article in the July 1958 edition of the magazine *Eiga Hyôron* (Film Criticism).
- 61 Desser, David. *Eros Plus Massacre*. pg 48.
- 62 See the 174-page catalogue for the ATG retrospective at the 2003 Vienna International Film Festival, entitled *Art Theatre Guild: Unabhängiges Japanisches Kino 1962-1984*.
- 63 For more information on Kawakita, see Richie, Donald, *A Tribute to the Kawakita Memorial Film Institute*. Hawaii International Film Festival catalogue 1991. Also Robinson, David, "Travels with Mrs. Kawakita," *Sight and Sound*, Autumn 1987. pg 253-155, and Mellen, Joan, *Voices from the Japanese Cinema*. New York: Liveright, 1975. pg 59-71.
- 64 Interview with Hirasawa, Gô. "Against the Grain: Changes in Japanese Cinema of the 1960s and early 1970s". *Minikomi* 70. pg 60.
- 65 The statistics can be found on the Unijapan website at www.unijapan.org. Out of interest, attendances hit rock bottom in 1996, at a 120 million, but the good news is that they steadily climbed after this, and by 2004 were up to 170 million again.
- 66 Ogawa, Kinya, interviewed in the documentary *Pink Ribbon*.
- 67 Inuhiko, Yomoto provides a wonderful portrait of the cinema-going climate during the '60s in the essay "Deux ou trois chose que je sais d'ATG", printed in the *Art Theatre Guild* catalogue that accompanied the ATG retrospective at the Vienna International Film Festival in 2003.
- 68 See *Pink & Porno*. Tokyo: Neko Cinema, 2001. pg 160.
- 69 I have not been able to establish how many prints were typically struck for each film.
- 70 Homepage for the *Pink Ribbon* documentary, www.uplink.co.jp/pinkribbon/bangai.html.



opposite: Scenes from Kokuei's lost female Tarzan film, *Valley of Lust* (1963), starring Kazuko Mine. ©Kokuei
this page: Images from its sequel, *Cave of Lust*, starring Aki Ema. ©Kokuei

Sex and sadism in a major studio release: Yumiko Nogawa gets punished in
Seijun Suzuki's *Gate of Flesh* (1964), produced and distributed by Nikkatsu.
©Nikkatsu Corporation



Pioneers of the Pink Film

The early development of the systems of production, distribution and exhibition that eventually congealed to form the pink industry bears a curious resemblance to the birth of the global institution of cinema itself. Many of the genre's early works are lost and its exact genesis is shrouded in mystery and myth; this small world was a chaotic, profligate and disreputable one, and much of its output thus went unrecorded and many of its practitioners unrecognised.

What we can say is that the '60s not only saw the establishment of three of the major pink companies that would still dominate the scene at the end of the millennium, it also marked the debuts of the first generation of pink filmmakers, many of whom would go on to form their own production companies and continue at the core of their chosen sphere for the next few decades.

Many of the early directors emerged from the small-screen medium of television, including Kôji Wakamatsu, Kôji Seki, Kaoru Umezawa and Mamoru Watanabe, as well as other, lesser-known, figures like Tsutomu Konno, an in-house director at TBS whose sole contribution to the genre was *Naked Insect* for Kokuei in 1965. TV at this time provided a stable income for fledgling filmmakers, but it was an anonymous form of filmmaking and was viewed as a poor second-best to earning a living making 'real' movies. The *eroduction* at least provided a way of making feature films that would be exhibited theatrically.

Directors who came from a bona fide background in cinema included Satoru Kobayashi and Kinya Ogawa, both associates of Mitsugu Ôkura, while Sojirô Motogi, as previously mentioned, moved to making pink films after producing several of the internationally-renowned classics directed by Akira Kurosawa. Seiichi Fukuda came from Shochiku's Kyoto studios, where he turned out dozens of B-movie *jidai-geki* and other similar program pictures during the '50s. Shinya Yamamoto originally worked as an assistant director at Iwanami Productions, a company that specialised in making industrial PR and educational films, and fostered such important figures in the history of Japanese documentary as Shinsuke Ogawa, Noriaki Tsuchimoto and Susumu Hani (though Hani is perhaps better known overseas for his fictional work). Kan Mukai⁷¹ also began with documentaries, making his debut in 1962 with the *kyôiku eiga*, or 'education film', *Two Boys*. His first pink film, an omnibus of three sexually-themed stories entitled *Flesh*, was distributed by Kokuei in 1965. Hajime Izu directed only one film – pink or otherwise – entitled quite simply *Woman* (1964). Prior to this single title for Kokuei he had been an actor at Toho, with fairly significant parts in



above: Kan Mukai's first pink film, *Flesh*, played widely outside of Japan under the alternative title of *Naked Flesh*. ©Kokuei



above: A lost classic? A scene from *Naked Insect* (1965), directed by the long-forgotten Tsutomu Konno. ©Kokuei

classic titles like Fumio Kamei and Satsuo Yamamoto's *War and Peace* (1947), Teinosuke Kinugasa's *Actress* (1947), Akira Kurosawa's *Stray Dog* (1949), and Mikio Naruse's *Wife* (1953).

Giichi Nishihara enjoyed an even more colourful path into the industry. His early success as a professional boxer saw him making a guest appearance in the Daiei production *Street of Iron Fists* (1947), directed by Kôzô Saeki. This triggered off Nishihara's interest in filmmaking and led to a job as an assistant director on *Morning Star Song* (1949) by the same director, setting him off on a new career path as both a bit player and a freelance filmmaker for companies such as Daiei or NHK television, before he founded his own pink production company, Aoi Eiga, and made his debut with *Highway of Passion* in 1965 (the kanji used for Aoi is the plant hollyhock, rather than the homophonic word for 'blue', to suggest 'blue film'). In 2002, his memoirs *Yakuza Kantoku* ('Gangster Director') were published, detailing this eventful life story along with his brushes with the criminal underworld.

The early practitioners were unimaginably prolific, with literally thousands of works between them directed over the course of the following decades, a comparatively minuscule number of which are available for viewing. Furthermore, complete filmographies of these early figures remain elusive. The primary source of information – the Japanese Movie Database website (JMDB), which draws its information from previous editions of Japan's premier film magazine, *Kinema Junpô* – is frustratingly patchy. For example, Kinya Ogawa is cited in various sources as making well over five hundred films, maintaining a workaholic rate of a film per month for much of his career, which is borne out by the fact that he celebrated this landmark figure in 1994 with the erotic period drama *Mystical 48 Positions: Pillow-Picture Woman*, shot on location at Shochiku's studios in Ôfunai, and with a budget of 10 million yen (three times the average, making it one of the most expensive pink

productions ever). However, the JMDB only (!) credits 417 titles to Ogawa's name, and more crucially fails to include his 1973 title *Sex Manual of the Human Race*. Produced to celebrate Ôkura's 60th anniversary in the movie business, and more importantly also as a reaction to Nikkatsu's new Roman Porno line, it allegedly cost 100 million yen (over thirty times more than the average pink film), a figure which seems inordinately generous for a film of this type, and has no doubt been inflated by the typically grandstanding claims of its producer. Nevertheless, this exhaustive trawl through mankind's sexual history, a kind of Japanese counterpart to *The Nine Ages of Nakedness* (1969), is by general consensus the most expensive pink film of all time. Though it seems there are no prints available for viewing today, one source, published nearer to the original release date, calls attention to two naked *gaijin* self-consciously posing as Adam and Eve, providing at least some indication of the film's contents.⁷²

The eminence of the directors cited today for their impact on the subsequent course of the pink genre is not so much due to their individual films. It is better attributed to the manner in which they carved out a niche for themselves in the evolving market by forming their own companies through which they produced their own films and nurtured new talent, in doing so creating an entirely new movement. The year 1965 alone saw the establishment of Wakamatsu Pro, Aoi Eiga and Mukai Productions, and by the '70s the practice of directors producing their works through their own companies was commonplace. Many of these filmmakers were highly idealistic about what they wanted to achieve, which was not so much fame for their own films, but setting a generation of younger protégés on a path of carrying on what they had begun.

Kan Mukai is particularly significant in this respect. His production house, founded in 1979 after the demise of his original Mukai Productions, was called Shishi Pro. Though spelt with the kanji for 'lion', the name was apparently intended as a pun based around the double repetition of the character *shi*, meaning 'four', signifying his ambition to foster sixteen directors who would go on to achieve success in their own right. This duly happened with, among others, Hisayasu Satô emerging as one of the most infamous figures of the '80s pink scene, and Yôjirô Takita being launched on a highly successful trajectory in mainstream cinema. Other filmmakers to pass through Mukai's company included Takuaki Hashiguchi, Shinji Imaoka, Minoru Inao, Shûji Kataoka, Hirotake Mukae, Saburô Naitô, Yûji Tajiri, Kaoru Umezawa, Mototsugu Watanabe, Masahiro Kasei, and Takahisa Zeze, as well as a number of cinematographers.⁷³

There is a big distinction that should be made here however, between actual production companies like Wakamatsu Pro and Shishi Pro, which employed several directors, screenwriters and other crew members and

creative agents, and pro forma 'companies' (often not even registered) that directors often form because pink film distributors will not sign contracts with individuals, and in fact are financed by the distributors, not by the company itself. The former situation seems to be very much a thing of the past, and while nowadays it is not uncommon for a director to produce films through his (or her) own company, this company typically takes the form of a small production unit that can be hired for subcontracted work.

In many respects, in its formative years the *eroduction* was nothing like the industry we know today. For a start, the very term *pinku eiga* had yet to take hold. It was first introduced into movie-going parlance in 1963, when the appearance of the naked jungle goddess at the heart of *Valley of Lust* prompted Minoru Murai, a journalist for the sports newspaper the *Naigai Times*, to advocate, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, a Pink Ribbon Award for these new *eroductions* in place of the Blue Ribbon Award, which was given to the year's best mainstream movies as selected by the sports newspapers⁷⁴ and sponsored by the Tokyo Film Press Association. The Blue Ribbon Award is still going to this day, but Murai's suggestion would also be taken up subsequently by a variety of specialist publications committed to this new erotic underground, such as *Seijin Eiga*, *zoom-up* and, most recently, *PG*. The choice of colour wasn't based on the Western dichotomy of 'blue for boys, pink for girls';⁷⁵ it suggested the rosy flush of sensuality that the works strove to provoke, which is strongly sensed in the Japanese word for the colour *momo-iro*, meaning quite literally, 'peach-coloured'. Peaches in themselves were an ancient symbol of fertility in Southeast Asia due to their suggestive shape and colour; hence the origins of the Japanese legend of Momotarô (the Peach Boy) and the banishment from the land of the gods of the simian central character of Wu Cheng'en's 16th Century classic of Chinese literature, *Journey to the West* (*Xiyouji*), for stealing these forbidden fruits. Furthermore, the character used for the word 'colour', which is read *iro* (or *shoku* or *shiki* in compound words) has strong sexual connotations: scholars believe it to be derived from a shape representing one person bending over another bending person.⁷⁶ It is used in words such as *kôshoku* ('amorousness'), *iroppoi* and *iroke* (both essentially meaning 'sexiness'), as well as for specific colours (i.e. *cha-iro*, literally 'tea colour', for 'brown', or *sora-iro* for 'sky blue').

The *pinku eiga* moniker for these films didn't fully catch on until much later in the '60s, so throughout these discussions of this first decade the descriptive label will be used interchangeably with the then-popular term *eroduction*. Nor were the early titles initially released into specialist adult chains, which arrived later in the decade along with other conventions such as the film's one-hour length (many of the '60s films were around the 80-minute mark), the clockwork-

like appearance of the sex scenes, and the films' manner of screening as part of rolling triple-bill programs.

Instead, the early *eroduction* films were released to standard cinemas to fill up shortfalls in theatre schedules due to the waning output of the majors. In the beginning, according to Kokuei's Daisuke Asakura, "Out in the provinces, newly released movies weren't run immediately, and movies that were released in Tokyo took about a month or two to get there. So we'd run ours together with these. And these drew a crowd. So things began in the provinces... At the time there were no triple bills, so shooting about six works a year was enough to make a living."⁷⁷ As the decade wore on and the major studios produced less and less, the demand for such audience-drawing independent productions grew.

In April of 1965 – the year representing the zenith of pink production, with two hundred and thirteen titles released – Ôkura's network of contractor cinemas was brought together under one roof to form the OP Chain (*OP Chên*), exclusively for the screening of *seijin eiga*. The original OP Chain (the company was dissolved and reformed on several occasions) distributed the films of Nihon Cinema (which had been founded by a former member of Kokuei, Hidemaru Washio), Aoi Eiga, Kanto Movie, Kantô Eihai, World Eiga and Roppô Eiga, as well as those of Ôkura's own production company. Kokuei was also supposed to join originally but, disapproving of Ôkura's dominance, countered with the establishment of the so-called *dokuritsu chên* ('independent chain'), which distributed its own films along with those of Nichiei and the new Shintocho (or rather, their Tokyo branch, Tokyo Kôei). This rival network was soon disbanded though, due to disagreements between the various parties. Nevertheless, by the beginning of the '70s the pink industry had developed its own self-contained system of distribution.

Before this however, the majors had also begun taking an active role in picking up these cheap productions to distribute themselves, with Shochiku and Nikkatsu between them showing the early works of Tetsuji Takechi and Kôji Wakamatsu in their own theatres. Sexual subject matter also became more central to these companies' works. Having captured the attention of the new youth market with the first *taiyôzoku* films, the company that unleashed the flood, Nikkatsu, had gone on to take a more populist route, making a string of commercial and initially highly-profitable light entertainment films that put the most commercial elements of the earlier films – their young and charismatic young stars – to work in a series known as Nikkatsu Action. These films were colourful cocktails that drew heavily from foreign movies of such diverse genres as the musical, romance, gangster movie and even the Western (the so-called 'Miso Western'). However, a couple of films distributed by the company that strayed from this commercial formula proved immensely influential on the pink genre.



The first of these was *Insect Woman* (1963), directed by Shôhei Imamura, a hugely important filmmaker in the history of Japanese cinema, whose name is often linked with the *Nouvelle Vague* due to his documentary-inspired explorations of cinematic technique and his focus on the largely-overlooked lower orders of society: this film's Japanese title, translating as *Entomological Chronicles of Japan*, highlights the almost scientific detachment with which the director treated his characters. Born in Tokyo in 1926 to a physician father, Imamura came from a fairly well-to-do background. However, as a young man growing up in the wake of the war, he began to stray from the conventional path that his upbringing had prepared him for, dropping out of

his guaranteed place at Waseda University (one of the country's most reputable educational institutions), where he was due to study Western History. The occupation period instead saw Imamura pitched into an entirely different environment populated by whores, gangsters and racketeers, as he hawked cigarettes and liquor stolen from US military bases on the black market and became heavily involved with a left-wing theatrical troupe. Both he and the circles he mixed in were highly critical of the emperor system that had led the country into war, and this is heavily reflected in his subsequent body of work for the screen, which often poses questions about the true nature of the Japanese character and how it was at variance with the official vision that the country was trying to promote.

Insect Woman is a pivotal work in his oeuvre, a gritty fanfare to the common man, or rather woman, centring as it does around the earthy figure of Tome (Sachiko Hidari), born in an impoverished rural village in the northerly Tôhoku area just prior to the end of the war. The story unfolds chronologically as it charts her rise from lowly hooker to brothel madam after being drawn through financial necessity to Tokyo, with intertitles and location shots of incidents such as the anti-American Anpo protests serving to situate Tome's story within its changing historical context.



日活 昆虫記

One would have thought that few would locate Imamura's film (which was voted the best of the year by the critics of *Kinema Junpô* and won Sachiko Hidari, along with her role in *She and He* – incidentally directed by her husband Susumu Hani – two Best Actress awards at the 14th Berlin International Film Festival) within the pink film genre. However, the director Mamoru Watanabe holds the opinion that it was this title, rather than *Flesh Market*, whose subject matter and manner of presenting it proved most influential to the typical *eroduction* narrative.⁷⁸ Viewing the film alongside many of the genre's subsequent works, it doesn't take a huge leap of the imagination to see the connections. Imamura's distinctive treatment of his female characters as the backbone of Japanese society – vivacious, tenacious and assertive – was highly original at the time, and closer to the contemporary reality of most viewers than the refined dramatic archetypes that had hitherto dominated the screen. More importantly, the film trod new ground in its cinematic presentation of its subject matter. Though what precious little nudity there is hardly seems played for titillatory intent, the behind-the-scenes portrayals of brothel life and its matter-of-fact depiction of sexual activity as something as commonplace and natural as eating or breathing seemed bold and daring at the time. And finally, the external scenes of the fences surrounding the American airbase outside of which the brothel is located, and its images of protests and of downtown Tokyo in a state of transformation, would become motifs employed within countless pink films during the '60s, most notoriously in Tetsuji Takechi's *Black Snow* (1965).

For the average pink production, there were no studios on hand to film at and so the only option was to shoot on location. The crews never applied for location permits, so were forced to grab their footage guerrilla-style. The filmmakers considered themselves to be outlaws, people whose class and background saw them barred from the traditional studio system. *Insect Woman* was something that was possible to emulate within these limitations, both in terms of what it portrayed, and also the means with which it portrayed them. It vividly captured the spirit of the time, depicting an environment that would have proved resonant and familiar to many viewers.

It is also important to bear in mind the cultural backdrop against which *Insect Woman*'s story is set. The year after its release all eyes became fixed on Japan, when the 1964 Olympic Games were held in Tokyo. The event signalled both the country's emergence on the international podium as a major rising economic power, and also a newly-found confidence among the public after almost two decades spent rising from the doldrums of wartime devastation. The games arrived in the same year the new Tōkaidō Shinkansen ('bullet train') line opened, forging a high-speed link between Tokyo and Osaka. As the capital became the locus for

Japan's rapid industrial expansion, the proliferation of blue-collar workers drawn to the city and living in cramped company dormitories formed the core audience for the *eroduction*.

Sporting a similar plot to Imamura's film, but bringing a more luridly lip-smacking emphasis to the events portrayed in its serialised narrative, was Kōji Wakamatsu's *Chronicle of an Affair*. Made in 1965, this tells the tale of a young farmer's daughter, Kayo, and her departure for Tokyo from her oppressive small village environment after a violent rape by three local roughnecks leaves her, in one of the genre's most iconic sequences, flailing around naked in the snow. Kayo's arrival in the big city occurs due to her being sold into a brothel run by the yakuza. After managing to escape from the rut of the sex industry via a brief spell working in a sewing factory alongside numerous other girls drawn from the countryside, she finally finds salvation at the hands of a wealthy sugar daddy, but her next attempt at social improvement ends up with her in a police cell, suspected of murder. The story is framed through Kayo's police interrogation, and though, typically for the genre, much of its critique of patriarchal authority is manifested by the sensationalised depictions of the protagonist's suffering at the hands of her many exploiters, ultimately she is seen as strong, wily and gaining the upper hand.

With films such as this, Wakamatsu became the first director in the pink genre whose name on the poster would in itself be enough to draw audiences. His masterstroke in this film, and one of the keys to his early popularity, was in staying true to his own experiences. Like both Imamura's heroine Tome and, more importantly, Wakamatsu himself, Kayo hails from the region of Tōhoku at the north of Japan's main island of Honshū. This area plays an important role in Wakamatsu's narratives, both in *eroduction* works such



above: Midori Chigusa, in the oft-emulated but never equalled rape scene that sets Wakamatsu's *Chronicle of an Affair* (1965) in motion. ©Wakamatsu Pro

as *Running in Madness, Dying in Love* (1969) and the director's more recent non-pink film, *Cycling Chronicles: Landscapes the Boy Saw* (2005), in which a 17-year-old boy drifts aimlessly across Japan on a bicycle after murdering his mother. The timeless and majestic mountainous panoramas of Kayo's birthplace are juxtaposed with the transforming backdrop of a capital swarming with construction workers and commuting salarymen. This use of contrasting landscapes to depict the individual as a product of a specific time and place would be adopted, adapted and deployed in a more theoretical manner later by one of Wakamatsu's key collaborators, Masao Adachi, and became known as 'landscape theory' (*fûkei-ron*).

The films of Wakamatsu, Adachi and their associates will be looked at in more detail in the following chapter, but it is first worth pointing out the sardonic final scene in *Chronicles of an Affair*, which sees Kayo walking free from the police holding cell as a neon sign behind her displays a scrolling message to the effect that America will protect Japan, articulating the increasingly domineering light in which the country's former occupiers were coming to be seen by certain sectors of the population. This view would inform the political agenda of many of the *eroduction* films of this time.

Chronicle of an Affair formed a template that would be reductively repeated in the pink film of the '60s, depicting women drawn by hardship from the provinces to the big city, where they would find themselves browbeaten and overwhelmed by the forces of patriarchy and capitalism. It lead directly to two films, also produced by Kokuei and going under the same name, that followed a similar format, though with the images of debasement increasingly overwhelming proceedings: Kan Mukai's *Continuation: Chronicle of an Affair* (1966) and Osamu Yamashita's *New: Chronicle of an Affair* (1967), in which a young *ama* girl is raped on a beach and attempts to start a new life as a nude model in Tokyo.



above: Takae Shindô's *Blue Assault: Abnormal Experience Document* (1967) features Yukari Ejima as the subject of one of the seaside assaults that proved such an enduring motif throughout the '60s. ©Kokuei

Takae Shindô's *Blue Assault: Abnormal Experience Document* (1967) is perhaps more representative of the *eroduction's* moral conservatism in its vicarious exposé of the evils of the big city.⁷⁹ It again features a young girl seeking to escape the claustrophobic confines of her small coastal hometown by fleeing to the capital, where she finds an even more heinous fate awaiting her. Her initial circumstances are emphasised, as is so often the case, by her being assaulted and stripped naked by a gang of local ne'er-do-wells in the early scenes. Fortunately, help is at hand for the girl, in this case named Kyôko, when a man named Yôsuke stumbles onto the beach where the attempted rape is taking place. Having come to her rescue, Yôsuke woos the grateful damsel in distress before he returns to Tokyo, and it is not long before she follows him down there. Unfortunately, her new lover is not all he seems, as he takes to spiking her whisky with sleeping drugs and inviting various clients around to do what they want with her prone body. Then one day she spots a newspaper headline in a shop window alerting her to an article about 'Abnormal Prostitution' (*ljô baishun*). Reading the article, the lights come on as she realises she is part of a larger phenomenon, and that Yôsuke is acting as a pimp for the yakuza.

A more playful vision of sex in the city during the swinging '60s/early '70s was provided some years later by Kan Mukai's marvellously-titled *Flesh Futon* (1971). It follows the adventures of two excitable country hicks from northerly Yamagata, clad in cowboy garb as they quit their job at a horse ranch, lured by the visions of carnality promised in the pages of a glamour magazine they are flicking through as the stallions canter playfully around the paddock. The city is rendered as the ultimate male fantasy playground, where even a simple brushing of shoulders with a member of the opposite sex automatically grants access to their bedrooms, although



above: Kan Mukai restaged Wakamatsu's infamous gang rape on a beach in his unofficial sequel to the original, *Continuation: Chronicle of an Affair* (1966). ©Kokuei



this too is never quite the simple act it seems: one gets a wad of ten thousand yen notes lifted from the inside pocket of his tasselled leather jacket following a colourfully-shot sequence on a love hotel revolving bed, while the other is misled into the boudoir of a transvestite in full geisha get-up. The discovery of an abandoned double bed and a mattress on a secluded grassy river bank in the city wastelands lends the film its title, prompting a number of delirious full-colour flights-of-fantasy sequences of the men sprawling over a writhing mass of naked female bodies.

While *Insect Woman* pointed to one of the several thematic paths down which the *eroduction* was to travel, it was another Nikkatsu movie that raised the bar in relation to the levels of nudity that became tolerated in mainstream cinema. Seijun Suzuki's colourful *Gate of Flesh* (1964) was set in the immediate post-war period, among a group of *pan-pan* girls (a term used for prostitutes who ply their trade to US servicemen) who eke out a living from their cavernous tumbledown base amongst the rubble of Tokyo. The four girls form a makeshift guild that operates along a strict set of guidelines, including the critical clause 'No Sex for Free'. Then ex-soldier Shintarô (played by Nikkatsu's moon-faced contract player Joe Shishido) stumbles into their

midst, seeking shelter after stabbing a GI, and shatters their hard-nosed solidarity. The sensational subject matter of Taijirô Tamura's original novel had already broken several precedents when it was first staged as a theatrical play in 1947, and it was swiftly followed by the first film version, directed by Masahiro Makino the following year (the story has subsequently been remade as a Roman Porno film in 1977, and by Hideo Gosha for Toei in 1988). Suzuki's version, with the rather brutal whippings that the girls administer to one another for



top: Hell hath no fury: Seijun Suzuki's *Gate of Flesh* (1964). ©Nikkatsu Corporation
above: Shôgorô Nishimura's Roman Porno remake of *Gate of Flesh* from 1977.
 ©Nikkatsu Corporation

violating their agreement, went further than any major studio production had gone before in terms of putting sex and sadism on the big screen. The following year, Suzuki brought back its main lead Yumiko Nogawa in *Story of a Prostitute*, set on the Manchurian frontline among a community of wartime comfort women, prostitutes enlisted to serve the Imperial army.

Neither *Insect Woman*, nor *Gate of Flesh* or *Story of a Prostitute*, can be considered *eroductions*, produced as they were by a major studio. But they do serve as historic marker points that demonstrate how commercial cinema was reacting to the excesses of this expanding independent sector. The *eroduction* producers responded in turn as the genre began to snowball in 1964. The early pink films, hampered as they were by tiny budgets, had been filmed entirely in black and white. This immediately gave them a conspicuously second-rate air in comparison to mainstream product that had first seen colour introduced some ten years before (though it should be pointed out that *Insect Woman* and *Story of a Prostitute*, along with many other studio productions, were also still being shot in monochrome). The quick-fix solution was to splice in colour stock for the more dramatic moments of the film, which essentially meant the sex scenes. As the Kokuei president Daisuke Asakura later described it, "I'm sure this was innovative at the time. When the sexy part begins, the screen lights up like a musical!"⁸⁰

The first such *pâto karâ* title was the now-lost *Mistress (Mekake)*, the 1964 pink film debut of *Flesh Market's* assistant director Kinya Ogawa. Born in Tokyo on 28 December, 1935, Ogawa was the son of kabuki actor Jijirô Nakamura. His uncles, Eima Ogawa and Kunimatsu Ogawa, also both belonged to the acting profession, between them appearing in numerous films for companies such as Tôa, Daito Eiga and Shochiku prior to the war (Kunimatsu Ogawa appeared in early silent works by Yasujirô Ozu and Daisuke Itô). It was therefore natural enough that the young Ogawa fell in love with the movies from an early age and so, after graduating from Chûô University in 1957, he started working as a freelance assistant director for a number of companies, which is how he came to work under Satoru Kobayashi on *Flesh Market*.

Like many of his contemporaries, Ogawa made literally hundreds of pink films. Though *Mistress* and his next work, *Independent Glamour Corps* (1964), were Kokuei productions, the bulk of his '60s output was made for Ôkura Eiga. He scored a huge hit for the studio in 1965 with the film *Female, Female, Female (Mesu mesu mesu)*,⁸¹ which is understood to be the reason Ôkura's company switched wholesale to the production of pink films. Ogawa stayed loyal to Ôkura for most of his filmmaking career, though founded his own company, Ogawa Project Production (*Ogawa Kikaku Purodakushon*), in 1975 to produce films that were released through the OP chain. Maintaining an extraor-

dinary output over the years under a plethora of pseudonyms (the most consistent being his scriptwriting penname of Kazuhisa Ogawa), his last directorial credit to date, *Molester Father-in-Law: New Wife Mischief*, was released in 2004.

Ogawa is probably best remembered for his handful of intriguing *pinku kaidan* – erotic ghost stories. As in Europe, sex found a close friend in the horror genre at an early stage. When Ôkura Eiga started up in 1961, the former president of Shintoho left it to directors like Satoru Kobayashi to continue where Nobuo Nakagawa had left off, with cut-price offerings like *Okinawa Hanging Phantom Ghost Story* (1962), *Ghost Story: Phantom Foreigner* (1963), and *Ghost Story: Cruel Phantom* (1964).

As assistant director on these films, Kinya Ogawa seemed perfectly well-qualified when it came to adding a more steamy frisson to the mix, though in terms of content and production values, his films in this peculiar sub-genre are as distinct from Nakagawa's elegant pieces as films like Jean Rollin's *The Rape of the Vampire (Le viol du vampire, 1968)* are from Terence Fisher's *Dracula* (1958).

The simple plot of his first work in this vein, *The Case of the Lusty Living Head* (1967), is essentially the old *Ghost Story of Yotsuya* template, minus the poison, as errant husband Fujiyama conspires to murder his pregnant wife Reiko with the assistance of his lover Junko, so as to make off with her inheritance. After drugging her, they leave her on some nearby train tracks, where a passing express decapitates her. The police treat Reiko's dramatic demise as suicide, but her vengeful spirit doesn't take things lying down, as the film bursts into colour for Reiko and Fujiyama's congratulatory lovemaking scene. From then on, Fujiyama becomes plagued with visions of Reiko's floating head, rendered by a simple matte effect that harks back to the efforts of Georges Méliès at the very dawn of film history.

Ghost Story: Dismembered Phantom (1968) sees Masako, the young lady of the family estate, returning from overseas following the death of her diplomat father. She had originally left in opposition to his second marriage to the avaricious Tomoko, who now parades her new lover Gorô around the house as if it were her own. When the family lawyer informs the gathered masses that it is Masako who is the legal inheritor of the entire estate, her elder sister Sumie and fiancé Shinjirô join Tomoko and Gorô in hacking up the unfortunate heiress with an axe. It is not long before the assorted pieces of Masako begin cropping up to drive them all insane, followed by her apparition in the traditional white smock with eyes peering wildly through straggly black hair.

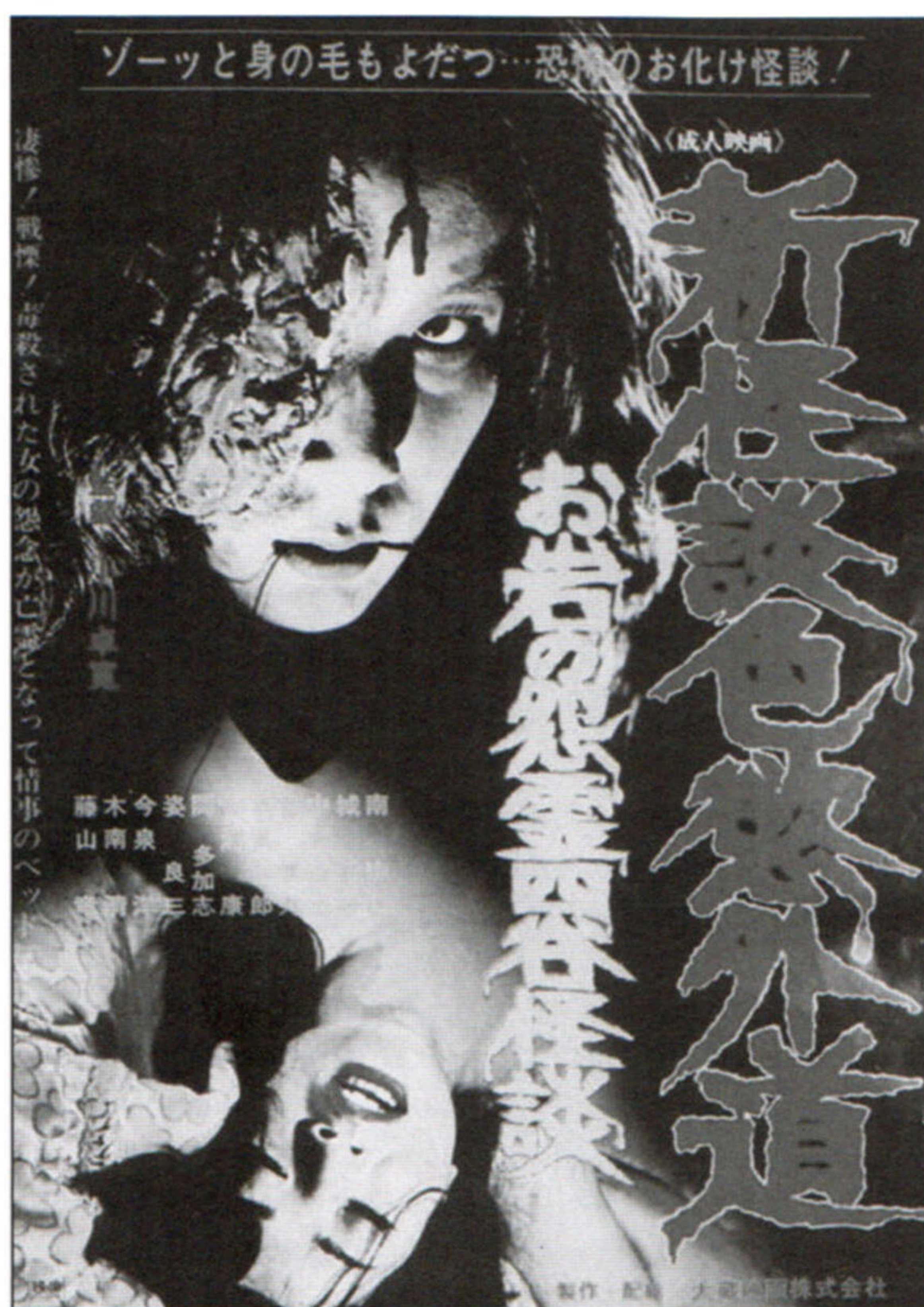
Ogawa's hidebound hybrids are modest in their thrills and chills, even as they burst into colour for the final frights. They nonetheless demonstrate a clear continuation of one of the strands of exploitation that

their mogul producer had been pursuing in his late *ama* movies. Though the supernatural component would be by and large dropped from subsequent pink films, Ogawa did later rekindle it in 1976, in *New Ghost Story Heretical Lust: O-Iwa's Vengeful Ghost*, and made an attempt at resurrecting it one more time as late as 2004, with *Carnal Desire Ghost Story: Beautiful Flesh Numb Fuck*. Satoru Kobayashi too made *Lusty Ghost Story: Rutting Woman Phantom* for Ôkura Eiga in 1995, and we'll take a closer look at two further post-millennial, or rather post-*Juon*, additions to the sexy spook sub-genre directed by Takuaki Hashiguchi and released by rival company Shintohe in the final chapter: *Mansion of the Senses: Wife's Ascension* (2004); and *The Slit-Mouthed Woman* (2005).

Ogawa's pink ghost stories do serve to demonstrate how this practice of adding colour sequences to monochrome productions could lend the key scenes a feverish, heightened intensity that remains one of the main charms of the product of the time. The films seldom needed a narrative justification for these abrupt bursts into full bloom, though occasionally they were provided. Mamoru Watanabe's *Secret Hot Spring Town: Nightly Starfish* (1970)⁸² for example, charts the ups and downs of a group of itinerant smut-peddlers made up of a man named Hisao, his wife (and main model) Saku, and their partner in crime, Tori. The film plays like a pink-tinged hybrid of Ozu's *Floating Weeds* and Imamura's *The Pornographers*, as the three make their living selling nude photos, staging live sex shows and screening



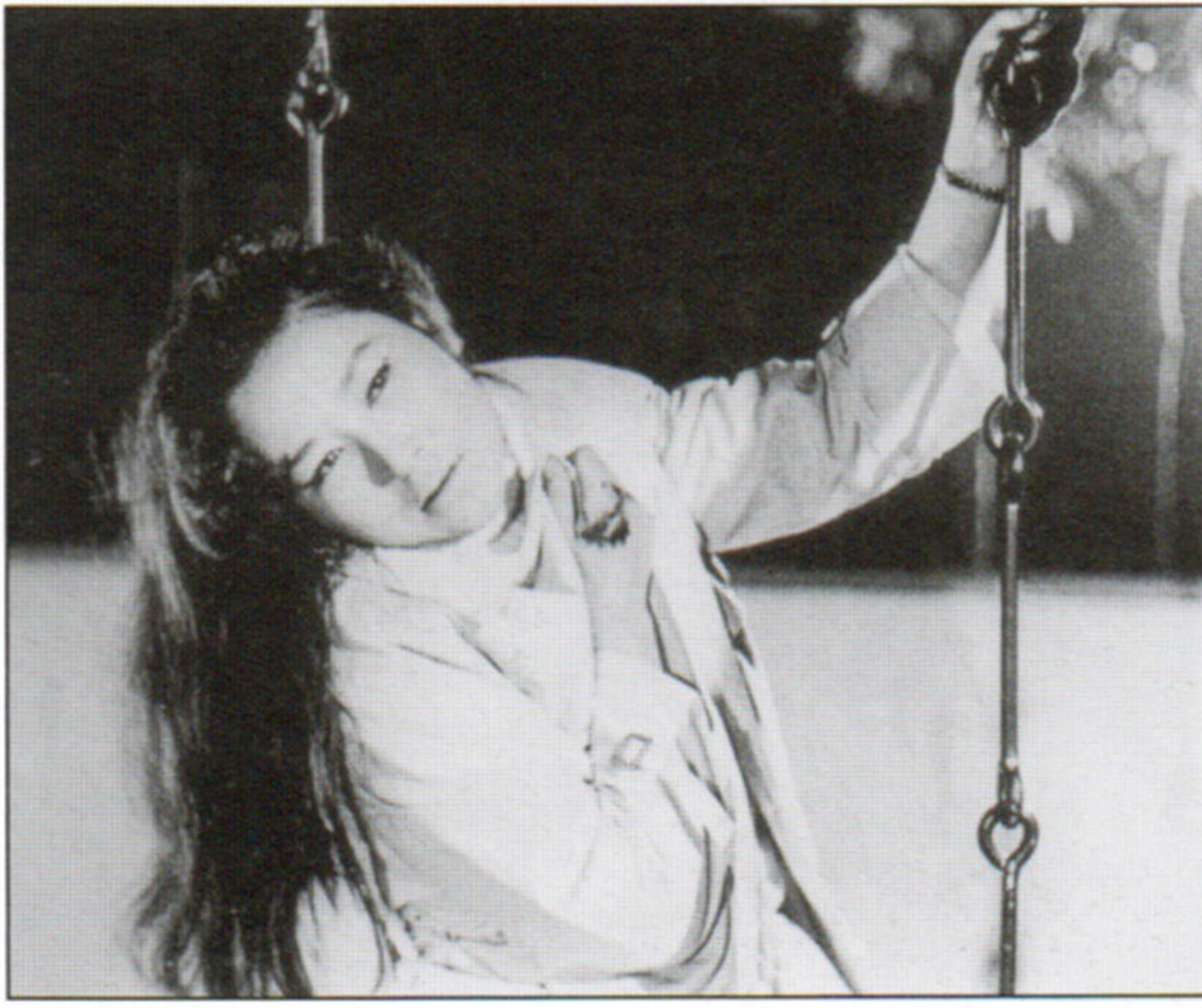
above: Kinya Ogawa's *Queen Bee Promiscuity* (1969), featuring a seductive Kaoru Miya and a suave-looking Hachirô Tsuruoka.



above: *New Ghost Story Heretical Lust: O-Iwa's Vengeful Ghost* (1976), one of Kinya Ogawa's later *pinku kaidan* offerings.

home-made blue movies to visitors of various hot spring resorts, and it is through these sequences in Hisao's illegal one-reeler stag films that many of the colour sex scenes are framed.

This inventively-staged film is of particular interest, as it was one of several fruitful collaborations between director Mamoru Watanabe and scriptwriter Atsushi Yamatoya (hiding under the pseudonym of Wataru Hino). Yamatoya (1937-93) was one of the anonymous writers behind the script for Seijun Suzuki's delirious gangster movie *Branded to Kill* (1967), and he also directed several films in the pink genre himself, including *Season of Betrayal* (1966), *Dutch Wife of the Wasteland* (1967), and *The Pistol That Sprouted Hair* (1968). A cult favourite in its own country and probably the most idiosyncratic work the genre has ever produced, *Dutch Wife of the Wasteland*, originally released under the title of *Horror Doll*, is almost explicit in its referencing of Suzuki's final film for Nikkatsu, which itself was foreshadowed earlier the same year by Takashi Nomura's not-dissimilar mood-driven Joe Shishido vehicle *A Colt Is My Passport*. If Nomura's film demonstrated that *Branded to Kill* was not the one-off eccentricity it is often thought to be, then Yamatoya takes Suzuki's baroquely-realised brand of dreamlike illogicality one step beyond. Comparisons between the two films are immediately noticeable on a stylistic level:



above: Tamaki Katori, one of the most ubiquitous pink actresses of the '60s, here in a still from Giichi Nishihara's *Female Trap* (1967).

the striking high-contrast monochrome cinematography; the quirky, hard-boiled performances; the hypnotic disjunction between sound and image; the use of montage to construct a surreal, alien-looking landscape that bears little resemblance to any recognisable vision of Japan; and the atonal jazz soundtrack, full of chaotic fanfares that blare out to punctuate the action. Further similarities are evident in the plot, which, in reference to the star of Suzuki's film, features a hitman going under the name of Joe, who is hired by a wealthy real estate agent to track down a woman (Noriko Tatsumi) kidnapped by a group of gangsters. The only trace of her at the beginning is an image on a projected piece of 8mm film, of her naked body being manhandled by her abductors. From this straightforward setup the plot immediately lurches into its own train of metaphysical logic, as illusionary dead lovers and a bevy of lethal vamps pop up to impede Joe's progress en route to the dreamlike resolution staged in a warehouse swarming with flies and crammed with life-size human dolls (the 'Dutch wife' of the title refers to the Japanese term used for a sex doll). Any meaning to it all is highly elusive, but as with Suzuki's film, there is clearly some method behind the onscreen madness.

Yamatoya's formal flair in the few films he made as a director has been overshadowed by his reputation as a scriptwriter. As we shall soon see, during this same period he often wrote for Kôji Wakamatsu, again anonymously, and later progressed through writing Nikkatsu Roman Porno scripts under his own name – also making one directorial contribution to the range in 1973 with *Trapped in Lust* (1973), starring Moeko Ezawa – to working on a number of larger, more commercial projects. Yamatoya died prematurely of cancer of the oesophagus in 1993, though his son Gyô, born in 1976, followed in his father's footsteps into a screenwriting career, albeit in a very different sector of the market – in kids anime – with credits including episodes of the animated TV series *Kinniku Man*, *Transformers* and *Naruto*.

Alongside *Dutch Wife of the Wasteland*, Yamatoya's smattering of collaborations with Mamoru Watanabe during 1970 highlight just how versatile a form of filmmaking the *eroduction* could be until it settled down into a generic format predicated by the requirements of a sex scene every ten minutes, which to some extent sapped it of its creative potential. Two Yamatoya-penned pink *jidai-geki* from Watanabe in particular – *Despicable Man-Killing Benten* (1969) and *Women Hell Song: Shakuichi Benten* (1970) – barely seem characteristic of the genre at all.⁸³ Both films draw their inspiration from Toei's popular late '60s *Red Peony Gambler* (*Hibotan Bakuto*) series featuring Junko Fuji, and follow the adventures of a roaming outlaw named Okayo (played by *Flesh Market* star Katori), more commonly known as Benten due to the prominent tattoo of the Buddhist Goddess of Love emblazoned across her back. In *Women Hell Song*, Okayo manages to find a safe haven from her persecutors in the arms of kindred spirit Seikaku, himself tattooed with the image of Kisshôten, the Goddess of Prosperity. Even when apart, the two share an almost telepathic rapport through their tattoos, with Okayo guided in her travels by the doleful sound of Seikaku's flute (as well as being the name of the traditional Japanese bamboo flute, *shakuichi* also refers to an easily-guessable oral sex act).

A mesmerising colour sequence of the tattooed protagonists making love in a deserted temple, superimposed over the watchful gaze of a statue of Buddha, ranks as one of the genre's most hypnotic set pieces. It perfectly showcases director Watanabe's florid approach to visuals and his lofty ambition to constantly push the *seijin eiga* to new aesthetic extremes. Born in Tokyo on 13 March, 1931, Watanabe's love of cinema was nurtured from day one due to his father owning a neighbourhood film theatre. The production company Daito Eiga (which later merged to form Daiei during the government's wartime reforms of the industry) had studios close by, and as a child Watanabe would sneak off to watch *jidai-geki* being filmed. The movies were a passion he shared with his older brother, who sadly passed away of tuberculosis at the young age of 22, in 1941. This tragic loss saw the young Watanabe inheriting a huge collection of film memorabilia, magazines and scripts, and a burning desire to be a part of this glamorous world. After entering Waseda University in 1950 to study Theatre, followed by a short stint studying acting techniques at the Hatta Motô Theatrical Research Centre, Watanabe duly entered the business, initially writing scenarios and working as an assistant director on dramas and educational films for TV, before making his debut in 1965 with *Hussy* for the tiny Ôgi Eiga independent production house. The film is now lost, but Watanabe remade it in 1979 as *Virgin Rope Makeover*.

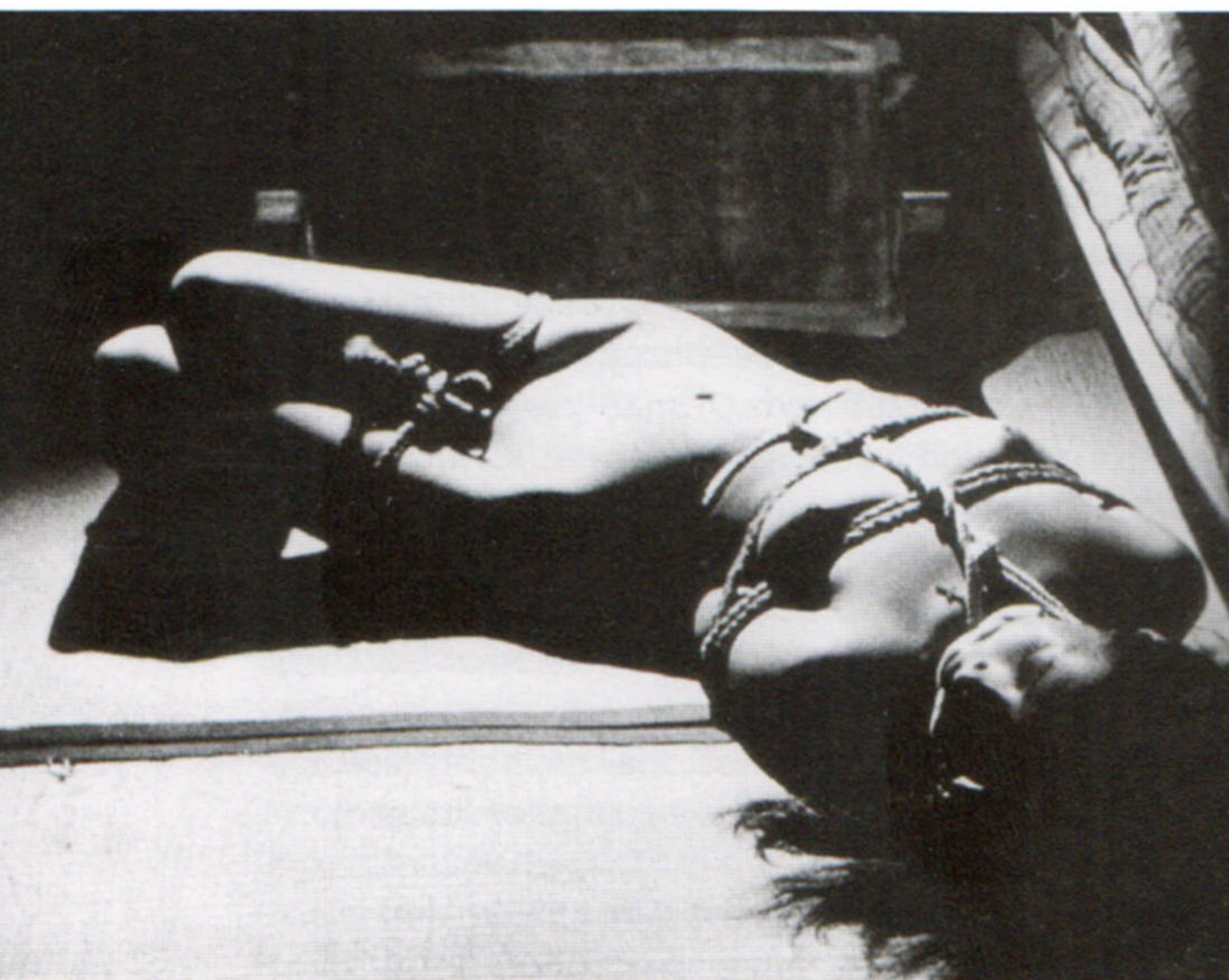
Watanabe's films are far more lyrical than one might expect from the pink genre, full of poetic symbolism and striking pictorial compositions and set to rousing,

emotive scores. His 1967 film, *Slave Widow*, opens with a stark image of the naked body of actress Noriko Tatsumi spotlighted and stretched out against a plain black background, her chest rising in time with her breathing. Tatsumi plays Mitsuko Fuji who, mere minutes after the opening credits, is left bereaved by the suicide of her husband following the collapse of his business. Fortunately, help is close at hand in the form of paunchy businessman Kitô, Fuji's largest creditor, who takes control of all her husband's debts, including the substantial mortgage on the luxury country villa in which she lives. Unfortunately it comes attached with the condition that she becomes Kitô's personal sex slave. Things become even more complicated when Kitô's son Kazuhiko falls for the vulnerable Mitsuko, putting in jeopardy his own marriage plans to his wealthy heiress fiancée.

Slave Widow manifests a severe distrust of the newly arisen moneyed elite in the guise of Kitô, and plays upon Kazuhiko's split loyalties between filial duty and romantic desire. This latter aspect is rendered cinematically in Kazuhiko's two love scenes with Mitsuko. The first, which takes place on the shores of a deserted mountain lake close to Mitsuko's country home, is accompanied by the natural melodies of rippling water, chirping crickets and bird song. The second, taking place in a cramped motel room back in Tokyo, is an altogether more desperate affair, drowned out by the drone of passing traffic outside. Typically though, it is the woman (described at one point as a "vampire") who must pay penance for disrupting the status quo, as in the final poignant shot Mitsuko immerses herself in the icy waters that formed the picturesque backdrop for her first consummation with Kazuhiko. The same year, 1967, also saw the release of *Blue Assault* and *New: Chronicle of an Affair*, both of which end on similarly tragic notes of self-sacrifice.



above: Noriko Tatsumi is the star of Yûki Takeda's bizarrely-titled 1968 feature *Woman Octopus Room*.



above: Giichi Nishihara's *The Devil Dwells in a Woman's Valley* (1972).

The part-colour format persisted all the way up until Nikkatsu launched its full-colour widescreen Roman Porno range in 1971, forcing the pink industry into an abrupt change. Even then however, a few production companies seemed a little slow to adapt, and in reality the pink industry didn't switch completely to the full colour format until 1974. As late as 1972 for example, Giichi Nishihara's *The Devil Dwells in a Woman's Valley*⁸⁴ (directed under the pseudonym of Shirô Sekiya) resorted to the even cheaper device of tinting the all-important footage in pink and green hues, though admittedly, combined with the widescreen scope cinematography, the results do look splendid. The film is a fairly undistinguished tale detailing the adventures of a girl picked up in the middle of Tokyo by a smooth-talking wide boy and given the time of her life before being whisked off to an *onsen* resort hotel in the middle of nowhere. Here the tables are turned when her seducer becomes her abductor, and she is put to service alongside a trio of previous dupes forced into working for the yakuza as bathhouse whores. Needless to say, she still has a few cards of her own up her sleeve when it is revealed that she is a spy for a rival gang of pimps.



above: An advertisement for Mukai's *Blue Film Woman*, one of Japan's earliest full-colour eroductions, billing itself as "One night's madness captured on 8mm camera" (*8 miri kamera ga toraeta yoru no kyôtai*) and playing alongside a film by Kôji Seki entitled *Legend of Three Eras of Japanese Sensuality* (*Nihon san-dai kôshoku-den*, 1969).

The first handful of All Colour (*Ôru karâ*) pink productions came in 1967, and included Osamu Yamashita's *New: Chronicle of an Affair*, Kinya Ogawa's *Forbidden Garden* and Satoru Kobayashi's *Pleasures of a Hussy*. Utilising colour film stock pushed budgets considerably past the ¥3.5 million mark, and it would be several years before it was adopted wholesale. However, the full-colour format did offer greater leeway for directors to imbue their works with a fuller, more vibrant expressiveness, and not just in the erotic scenes. Kan Mukai's *Blue Film Woman* (1969) in particular looks like it is making up for lost time, exploding into its super-saturated hues from the very first frame, as the credits appear over a score dominated by bongos and sitars and the screen is crammed with distorted 8mm images taken from a mock blue film, flooded with prismatic blotches of primary reds and blues and silhouettes of naked female bodies – not unlike a more lysergically-inspired version of a Bond movie credit sequence. The plot of *Blue Film Woman* is an equally delirious mishmash of horror, sexploitation and trippy nightclub sequences, centred around the family of a stockbroker whose unexpected financial crash results in him offering up his wife to his sleazy, saurian creditor Uchiyama. After prodding and pawing over her in the

standard fashion for films of the genre, Uchiyama then locks her up in the garden shed inhabited by his mutant idiot son Hiroshi, who arrives from the rafters clad in carnation-coloured robes. She manages to escape from his clutches in the nick of time, only to be mown down by a passing car. With her father now reduced to a gibbering wreck, it is left to the daughter, Mariko, to seek revenge for her mother's untimely demise. Rising from her job as a nightclub go-go dancer, Mariko winds up as a high-class call-girl servicing a group of prosperous businessmen, whom she blackmails to help her bring down Uchiyama after their nocturnal dalliances are captured on camera.

Mukai's film is a highly stylised piece, with many of the bed scenes bathed in a frenzy of lilac, blue and crimson gels, the camera keeping an incredibly tight frame throughout both the horrific and the bedroom action. In particular, the scenes of Mariko dancing in a nightclub whose walls are adorned with pastel spirals in tune with late '60s psychedelia (circa the time of Pink Floyd's revolutionary experiments in light and sound at London's UFO Club) unfold in an all-out sensory overload of tilted camera angles and stroboscopic edits.

The retro charm of such visual time-capsules is easy to appreciate. They bring back to life a vanished era that hums to the strains of a flute-heavy soundtrack, as young people were drawn in their droves by the bright lights of the big city like moths to a flame, and coffee shops and funkily decorated nightclubs represented the height of metropolitan sophistication. The rounded, shapely forms flaunted by the long-lashed leading ladies, turned out in the fashions of the time such as Alice bands, mini-skirts, polka dots and calf-length boots, also possess an appeal lacked by the emaciated-looking starlets currently in vogue.

Blue Film Woman's overwhelming visuals obscure the fact that, typically for the era, it is not particularly explicit. In fact, as films like this, Ogawa's ghost films and Watanabe's *Women Hell Song* demonstrate, the reduction of the pre-Roman Porno *eroduction* to the label of a 'sex film' is a little misleading. Compared with what had been occurring in the West, such as in America in the wake of Russ Meyer's watershed nudie *The Immoral Mr. Teas* (1959), the films' depictions of bare bosoms and buttocks appear pretty restrained. Though audiences were lured in no small part through the promise of nudity, such scenes were never entirely allowed to dominate proceedings.

And so in part the genre became not only predicated by its erotic content, but also by its stories' sordid situations and milieus. Scenarios based around blackmail and corruption, gangsters, vice rings, the lives of prostitutes and lurid exposés of the capital's nightlife abounded, echoing the content of the similar low-budget exploitation movies that were arising across Europe and America during the same period. How many of these foreign works came to be screened in Tokyo



cinemas around this time is unclear, though issue number 42 of the magazine *Seijin Eiga* advertises the support feature for Kôji Wakamatsu's *Running in Madness, Dying in Love* as Romolo Guerrieri's sexy thriller *The Sweet Body of Deborah* (1968) starring Carroll Baker.⁸⁵ Generally however, the exhibition sector at this time was divided into cinemas that exclusively screened local productions and those devoted to showing foreign films, a phenomenon reflected in the listings in *Seijin Eiga*.⁸⁶ The glamour photo-shoots within the magazine's pages were also virtually all of Japanese actresses.

In other parts of the world, the censorship of sexual material began to ease off during the late '60s as those entrusted with wielding the scissors and the red pen fell more in line with the prevailing winds of the international marketplace. In Britain the pubic frontier found itself breached with the releases of Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow Up* (1966), Jonas Cornell's *Hugs and Kisses* (1967), Lindsay Anderson's *If...* (1968), and Ken Russell's *Women in Love* (1969). The latter presented the first airing of the male member in British cinema, something which has still to this day to occur in a Japanese production. The function of the censors became less that of excising a range of forbidden images than engaging in debates about the intentions of the filmmakers, the overall context of the inflammatory footage, and the effect the work as a whole would have on audiences. In America, an industry code enforced at source level by the production studios found itself increasingly irrelevant with the proliferation of independent productions. These included both the cut-price grindhouse fodder that counted as the *eroduction's* closest equivalent, and more critically-appreciated works like Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) and Dennis



above and top left: Kemi Ishiboshi is manhandled in Kaoru Umezawa's *The Smell of Ecstasy* (1969).

Hopper's *Easy Rider* (1969), with their displays of other no-go areas such as graphic violence and drug abuse. In response to these rapidly eroding boundaries, the nationwide Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) rating system was imposed in 1968, with Russ Meyer's *Vixen!* being one of the first films to receive the newly-formed organisation's X rating. With further suppression of individual films coming at the level of the individual state authority, Meyer's film still found itself barred from screening across half the country, due to the intimations of an incestuous relation in the simulated sex scenes between its main characters rather than the amount of bare flesh on display.

Vixen! presents an interesting contrast between the two cultures as to what was considered acceptable around this time. Under Russ Meyer's masterly control of framing and rapid-fire edits, little more actually makes it to the screen than in a typical pink production from the same time. Following the establishment of the X rating, however, over the coming years the American sex film would go on to portray sexual acts in an increasingly explicit fashion. What had caused the initial furore with Meyer's film was the overall context in which it was shown. In Japan, the case is more black and white. Scenarios driven by insinuated underage sex, or violent sexual assault were, and still are, hardly rare in pink films,

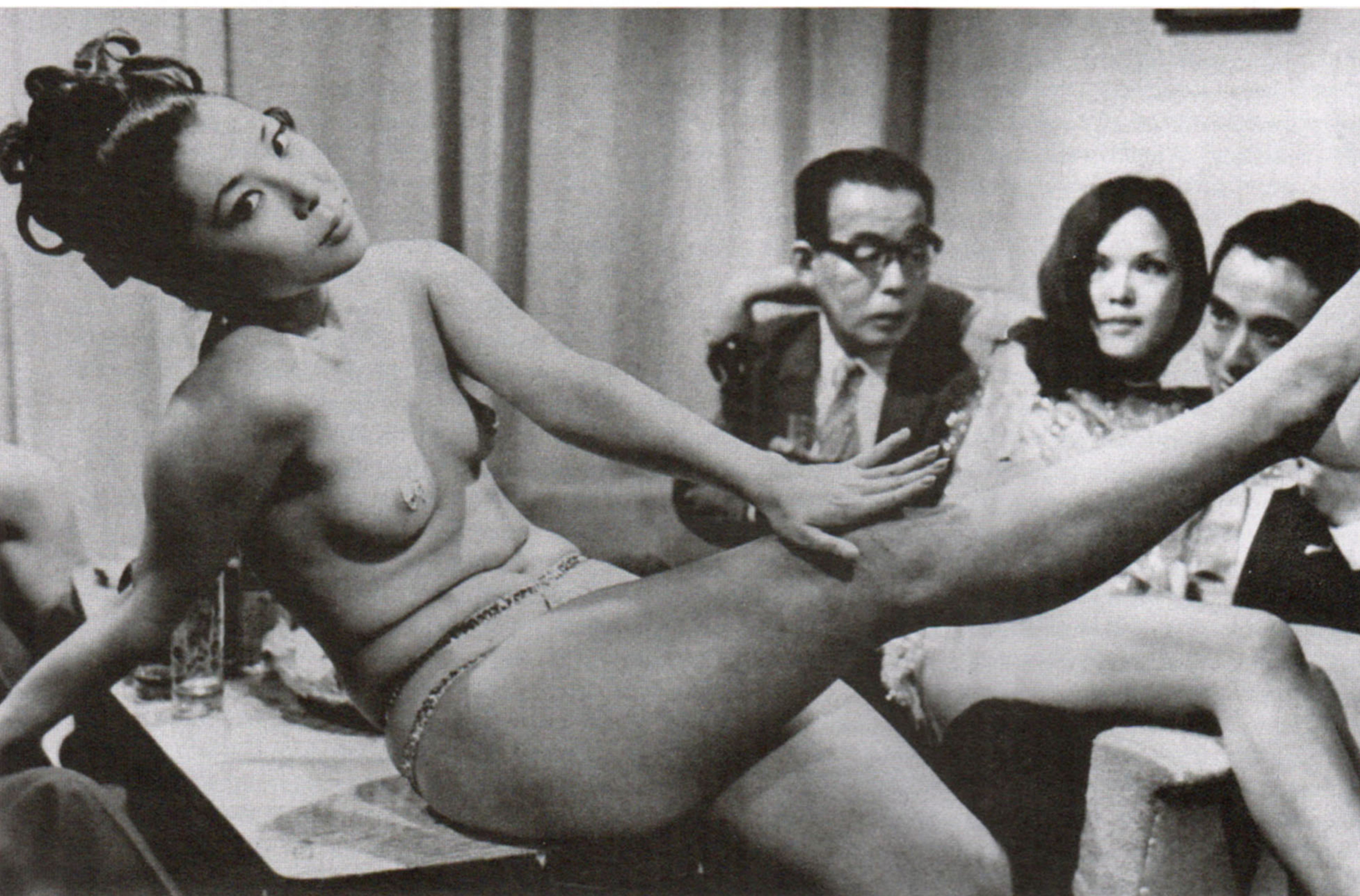
as long as the misdemeanours portrayed have not actually taken place in reality. The guiding principle is that the Public Hygiene Law isn't violated through the portrayal of genitals or pubic hair. Eirin, who are not affiliated to the government in any way, remains on hand to advise cuts in order to gain its seal of approval and to ensure that no film can be accused of 'obscenity'. But during the '60s the rules regarding what was actually constituted by this word 'obscenity' were a little vaguer than nowadays. And so pink filmmakers erred heavily on the side of caution, often resorting to suggestive assemblages of naked body parts or abrupt close-ups of thickets of underarm hair to trick the eye into seeing that which was not there.

Satoru Kobayashi's *Impotence* (1967) gives an indication of the limits filmmakers stayed within. The story concerns a young couple, Mari and Susumu who, contrary to his name (as well as being a common man's name, *susumu* is the Japanese verb meaning 'to progress, proceed or advance'), lacks much in the way of enthusiasm in the bedroom. This seems to be attributable to the trauma of his mother announcing she is moving back to the countryside, abandoning him in Tokyo. In truly selfless fashion, Mari ends up sleeping with her boss at the bar where she works as a hostess so that she can raise funds to pay for the medical treatment for her boyfriend's lack of ardour. The therapy seems to work, at least until Susumu loses his nerve with an older

woman who coaxes him into a love hotel. Susumu flees to the countryside where, after assaulting a schoolgirl, he collapses into his mother's arms and confesses his sins. Meanwhile, Mari is left to shoulder the guilt of her affair, and in a gaudy nightclub scene after the film has burst into colour for the final reel, she slowly strips in a drug-inspired state of paranoia before reproachfully confronting the camera in the final frozen shot.

Throughout the film, scenes are carefully composed to restrict the audience's views of the women's bodies. The film opens with Mari writhing naked in the summer heat on the bare *tatami* of the bedroom. A sliding panel obscures her from the waist down. During the love scenes, she lies prone and self-conscious, awkwardly fiddling with the sheets. Susumu elongates himself on top of her, his hands covering her breasts. Mari's face remains frozen in a blank expression situated somewhere between beatitude, intense concentration and boredom. Her pleasure is implied by shots of her ankles twitching, her hands unfolding, her head slowly lolling from side to side or tilting back slowly, while a fully-clothed Susumu timorously muzzles her bare midriff.

Even as apparently provocative a title as Mamoru Watanabe's *Abnormal Eros: Assault with No Tomorrow* (1970) seems fairly innocuous when compared to the later overindulgences of the rape sub-genre, tastefully fading out before its opening moments of two thugs molesting a married couple strung-up in their living



above and opposite: Miki Hayashi gives a private performance in Kinya Ogawa's *Sensual Apartment: Secret Room* (1968).

room become too hard to handle. The rest of the film depicts the troubled relationship between the instigator of the assault – having silenced his partner-in-crime with a revolver – and his girlfriend (Miki Hayashi) as he hides out by whisking her away on a romantic break to a hot spring resort in the countryside. In their hotel room, a TV news report of the crime arouses doubts in the girl's mind as to the true nature of her lover. There then ensues a dramatic and highly dialogue-driven psychological battle of wills, as she is persuaded to stand by her man while he does his best to make sure his dark impulses remain secret. As befits its director's more cinéphilic affectations, *Assault with No Tomorrow* forestalls all expectations of brutality through a stylised approach that seems redolent of European art films from around this same period. It comes as no surprise to learn that Watanabe often reprised the plots of the films he admired and doctored them for the *eroduction* market.

Aside from the freak appearances of the films of Kôji Wakamatsu at overseas festivals, the huge body of work turned out by the *eroduction's* grassroots practitioners went unregistered by Western writers at the time of their release. One of the first pieces of foreign writing to take a holistic view of this new industry came in 1972, in the form of Donald Richie's essay "The Japanese Erodution."⁸⁷ Adopting the role of cultural commentator rather than film critic, Richie's piece is just as much a critique of the audiences as it is a consideration of the films themselves, which he remains loathe to dignify with mentions of individual titles.

In an otherwise blanket dismissal of the entire scene, Richie does however pinpoint one unavoidable aspect of the *eroduction* that has proven particularly off-putting to foreign researchers trying to assess the genre's impact, which is its latent misogyny (though his rather rose-coloured view that sexual union was portrayed as an egalitarian, playful act in similar Western products of the time can be easily overturned by anyone familiar with such films). The *eroduction*, Richie suggests, is really less about sex than the "denigration of women." "Common are scenes where," he states, "in order to escape, women must run naked through the fields or the streets; scenes where nude or near-nude women are overtaken in muddy rice-paddies, knocked down, mauled, and dirtied by their attackers; scenes where women are blackmailed or are in other ways compelled into giving themselves to various perversions, the most overwhelmingly common being: tied up, hung up by wrists, savagely beaten, otherwise mistreated by sticks, lighted candles, and – odd, but an *eroduction* favourite – long-handled shoe-horns."

While it is certainly true that the bulk of *eroduction* titles presented sex in a shamefacedly earnest fashion, as something dark, desperate and deeply pathological, not all films from this period are as relentlessly straight-faced as Richie frames them ("risible and humourless," as he puts it). Still, the introduction of any degree of fun to

proceedings certainly came late in the day, and it appears to have been entirely the doing of one man. Nowadays Shinya Yamamoto is best known as a TV host. His job co-presenting the show *Tonight* saw him famed for its dark trawls around the seedier aspects of Tokyo nightlife. Yamamoto still prefers to be addressed as 'kantoku' (director) by his fellow TV presenters, though following his thirty-year stretch in the pink industry, later mainstream works like the undistinguished straight-to-video title *Hello to Mr. Ghost* have failed to bring him as much attention as the lovable old goat persona which he brings to the small screen. One memorable recent television outing saw him accompanied by an Asahi TV crew to the 2004 Pyongyang Film Festival, where he presented his 15-minute 1993 black comedy short *To Live: That Near Death Experience* to a North Korean audience who sat in stone-faced silence throughout the experience.



Nevertheless, from his 1965 debut *Blossoming Out of Season* for the company Nihon Geijutsu Kyôkai, Yamamoto's work in the field has been characterised by a bawdy, slapstick approach, often featuring speeded-up montages paying homage to silent comedy, and a sniggering but infectious brand of humour that is often close to the bone in its lapses of taste, but is ultimately too puerile to be truly offensive.

Yamamoto's lasting legacy on the pink film would be in launching two long-running series that would provide the meat and gravy for future generations of filmmakers. Beginning in 1969, the *Widow Boarding House* scenario typically saw hot-blooded but naïve male students assembled for the first time away from home beneath the roof of a predatory widowed mamasan, while in 1975 his *Molester Train* unleashed a wave of perverse comic escapades staged on various types of public transport. Yamamoto followed it up himself with *Molester Underground* (1975), and *Molester Night Train* (1977), but the true inheritor of both the series and Yamamoto's comic style would be Yojirô Takita, who pretty much claimed it for his own during the '80s.

The women's *onsen* provided another perfect setting for Yamamoto to lay out his frolics amongst as much bare female flesh as possible, and he turned to this particular setting on numerous occasions, including *Woman's Onsen History* (1969), *Comedy Woman's Onsen Rebellion* (1973), *Woman's Onsen Hundred Year History* (1974), *Document: Pervert Woman's Onsen Peeping* (1975), and even *Lusty Invisible Man: Woman's Bathhouse Peeping* (1979). His characteristically light-hearted *Woman's Onsen! Woman's Onsen! Woman's Onsen!* is centred around the jaunty figure of Seiji, an itinerant wastrel who was born in such an establishment and has a strong premonition that he will die in one too. Much of the steamy activity arises from his return to his home town of Mishima where he finds employment in a hot spring resort run by a couple of old friends. Here, he roams around the changing room doing his duties without any of the film's bevy of fleshy camera fodder (including a tattooed yakuza mistress and an extremely fat girl) seeming to be perturbed by his presence, while fending off the advances of his friend's wife (played by Kazuko Shirakawa, who would soon become the first of Nikkatsu's Roman Porno starlets, though ironically she is

the only woman here to keep her clothes on.) The story unravels in a series of comic escapades, such as when a man attempts to hide himself amongst the bathhouse beauties by sneaking into the bathroom in drag, and when one of the girls unselfconsciously shits in the bath. The part colour format is used inventively, with the film ending on a comic high note with a humorous reference to Kurosawa's *High and Low*, as pink smoke rises from the bathhouse chimney stack when Seiji is cremated.

Yamamoto's comic touch seems to be something of an exception in this first phase of pink history however. What synopses of films from this era demonstrate is that before the genre's salacious set pieces began to take precedence and became elaborate showstoppers in their own right, the confinement of women to their correct place in order to satisfy their target audience was manifested by way of plot mechanics rather than explicit depictions of the acts portrayed, and so to a great extent, as Richie points out, these plots very quickly developed into formula.

"An assured audience", writes Richie, "means a standardized product. It is only in times of economic disaster that different formulas are tried and experimentation is indulged. If commercial cinema in Japan is now changing its content along with its form, it is only because the assured audience has largely disappeared. The eroduction, however, has its own loyal audience and this has resulted in its becoming a codified form of entertainment."

Over the coming chapters, what should become clear is that the content of the pink film *has* adapted with the times, with its survival threatened in turn by the arrival of the more generously-budgeted Nikkatsu Roman Porno film and the cheaper, more basic, thrills provided by Adult Video. Over the years, for a variety of reasons, what Richie refers to as the "connecting tissue" of plot has proved far more mutable than one might expect, and even in its first decade there were those who would exploit the field's popularity and adapt its supposedly rigid formula to more subversive ends.

Footnotes

⁷¹ This director is often credited in older sources in the English language as Hiroshi Mukai, an alternative reading of his first name. Kan is the first name by which people I have spoken to in the industry have referred to him, so this is the one I have opted to use, even though technically either is correct.

⁷² Murai, Minoru and Kawashima, Nobuko (eds). *Dokumento seijin eiga pinku kara roman poruno made: seijin eiga 15-nen kiroku*. pg 204.

⁷³ Director's profile on www.kuruma.org/mukai/profile.html.

⁷⁴ The term used in Japan for tabloid newspapers.

⁷⁵ In Japan the division is traditionally white for boys, red for girls, best represented by the annual end-of-year battle of the sexes in NHK's televised *Kôhaku Utagassen* song contest.

⁷⁶ Henshall, Kenneth G. *A Guide to Remembering Japanese Characters*. Vermont: Tuttle, 1998. pg 41.

⁷⁷ *24th Pia Film Festival Catalogue*. pg 82.

⁷⁸ Interviewed by the author in July 2005.





opposite bottom left: Tamaki Katori provides the *Temptation of the Flesh* in Giichi Nishihara's film of the same name from 1967.
above: With films like *The Pornographers* (1966), Shôhei Imamura focused on many similar themes as the eroduction, though in a rather more witty and sophisticated fashion. ©Nikkatsu Corporation

79 The character *aoi* in the title, though meaning 'blue', can confusingly enough also be read as 'green'. It has a figurative association with the words 'immature', 'young', and 'unripe'. For example, in compounds (where it is pronounced either *sei* or *shô*) such as *seishun* for 'youth' (literally 'blue spring'). There is no association with 'blue movies'.

80 Daisuke Asakura interview in the *24th Pia Film Festival Catalogue*.

81 The title is a combination of the katakana giving the phonetic reading 'mesu' and the two kanji characters used for this same word; meaning female, *mesu* generally denotes the gender of animals rather than people.

82 Due to the ambiguous use of hiragana, in his *Japanese Cinema Encyclopedia: The Sex Films* Weissner translates the *Yoru no hito de* part of the title as 'People at Night', though it more likely refers to the evident sexual connotations of the word 'starfish', or *hitode*.

83 At least, we can say this of the second of these two films, because the first no longer appears to be extant.

84 The innuendo contained within the word *tani* ('valley') is fairly obvious.

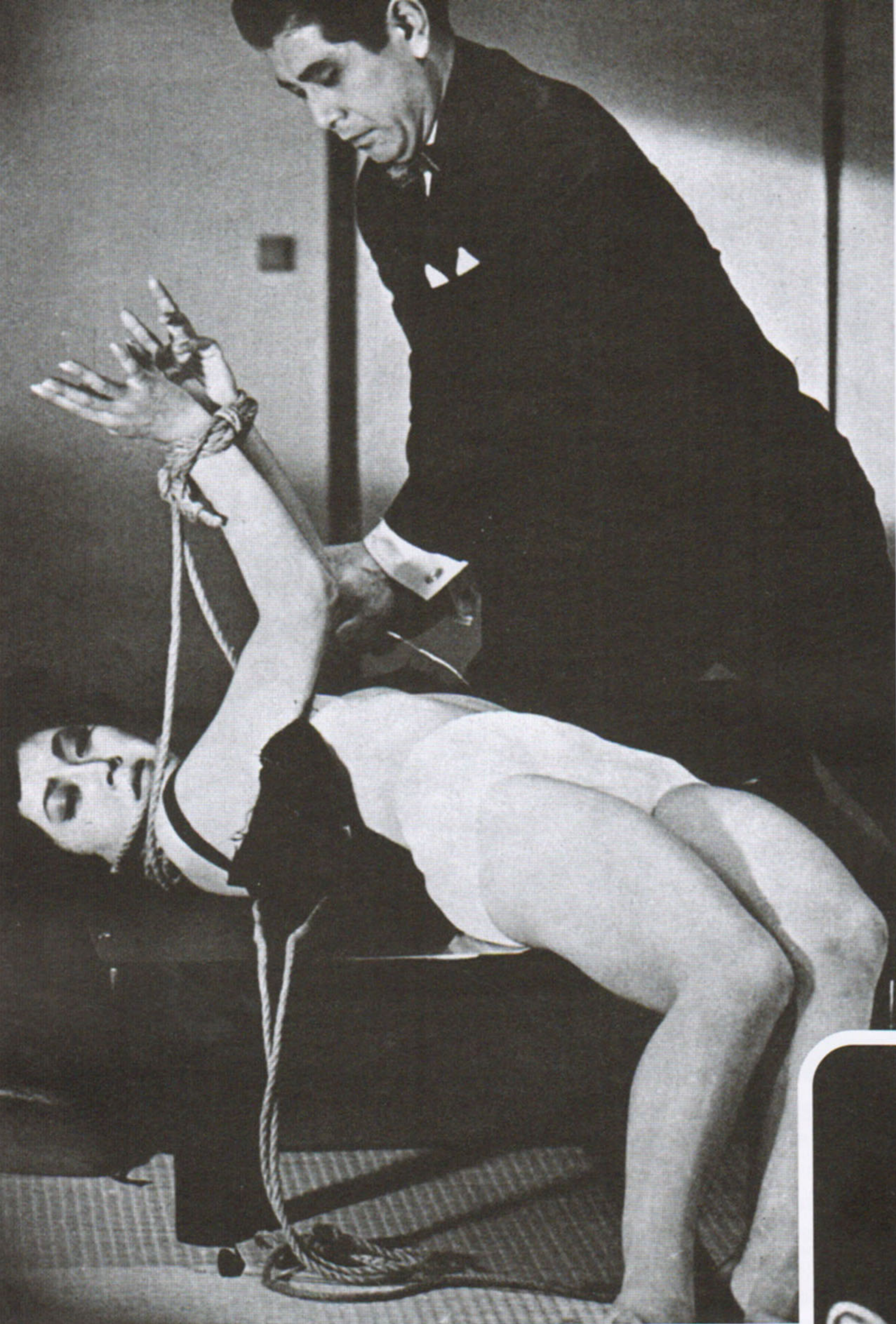
85 *Debora no amai nikutai* played from 30 June to 5 July, 1969 at the now-vanished Shinjuku Keiô Meiga-za.

86 The long tradition of cinemas dedicated to screening domestic productions persists to this day primarily in the pink exhibition network, though there are still a couple of major studio-owned theatres, like Toei's Maronouchi theatre in the Ginza area of Tokyo, that only screen their own (and hence non-foreign) productions.

87 Richie, Donald, from *A Lateral View: Essays on Culture and Style in Contemporary Japan*.



above: Toshio Okuwaki's *Rapturous Sex* (1968), featuring starlet Michiyo Mako.



Pinkos in Pink

Sex and politics might not make for the most comfortable of bedfellows, at least where cinema is concerned, but they soon became linked in the lawless realm of the early *eroduction*. What linked the two activities in particular was that they both attracted the most enthusiasm and interest from young people, the sector of the population with the most energy for them – if not the most practical experience or finesse – and in addition, traditional etiquette had seen both practised as secret acts, behind closed doors. However, the protests surrounding the extension of the Anpo Treaty in 1960 had seen politics violently spilling out onto the streets in a series of mass riots and demonstrations. In the years that followed, the rapidly expanding *eroduction* genre would also soon be bringing sex and adult subject matter closer to the immediate attention of the general public, goading the authorities by nudging the boundaries of what was considered ‘obscene’ and a threat to the public order. With both political partisans and pornographers antagonising the establishment, it was almost inevitable that they would join hands.

The decade represented an exciting period of vast upheaval in the social and cultural spheres across much of the globe, and of a unique synergy between political idealists and counter-cultural artistic movements. Student bodies worldwide united in reaction to America’s involvement in the Vietnam War, as well as hosts of domestic issues pertinent to life in their own countries, while creative agents of various disciplines took to attacking existing power structures using their respective mediums. In February 1968, politicised cinéphiles took to the streets of Paris to protest the unseating of the founder of the Cinémathèque Française, Henri Langlois, from his post by the unpopular de Gaulle government: this seemingly minor occurrence provided an early indication of the disgruntled mood of the rest of the country, as in May that year student protests grew into a nationwide strike and riots. The following year, John Lennon and Yoko Ono famously staged their bed-in for world peace in room 902 of the Amsterdam Hilton.

In Japan, the revolution began on the university campuses, had its flames fanned in the Art Theatre Guild’s Shinjuku Bunka cinema, and spread like wildfire across the streets of Tokyo and beyond. By the early years of the ’70s it had all but burnt itself out at home, as internal disputes led to the various factions who carried the torches and Molotov cocktails fragmenting into a bickering jumble of distinct, ideologically opposed units, many of the members ending up either

slaughtered at the hands of their comrades or dispersed across the globe and carrying on the struggle in destinations as far afield as Pyongyang, Hanoi and Beirut. But the events during this period of escalation have left us with perhaps some of the most extraordinary images ever set in celluloid.

The struggle between left and right took on a rather different complexion in Japan than in other parts of the world, as a result of the nation’s historically troubled relationship with America. The signing of the Anpo Treaty has already been mentioned in passing on several occasions, but as politics is rather more central to the films discussed in this chapter, it is necessary to look a little closer at the circumstances and events that led to, surrounded and followed it.

When the occupation departed in 1952, it left Japan without its own self-written constitution, and effectively without an army (though Article 9 was bent to permit a standing army known as the Self Defence Force, or *jieitai*, “to protect the peace and independence and preserve the safety of Japan by defending it against direct and indirect attack and, when necessary, to help preserve public order.”)⁸⁸ Instead, America’s legacy took the form of a string of military bases across the country that controversially remain to this day, most conspicuously at Yokota, just outside Yokohama, along with the sizeable garrison held in Okinawa.

With the Cold War reaching fever pitch, the general public’s concern regarding the Anpo Treaty was that Japan would lose its post-war status as a pacifist nation. Instead, its close alliance with its former adversary America would see it becoming a Southeast frontline from which the battle against communism in Russia and China would be fought. The public at large was particularly concerned that this might end up in a repeat of the atomic attacks that had devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but this time launched by the new communist powers. After all, the civilian population had already been punished severely due to the wartime government’s occupation of the Asian mainland, and so at almost every level there was strong resistance to any pact with America that would side them against the Soviet Union or communist China. Japanese fears were not entirely unjustified. On 1 May, 1960, a fortnight before the signing of the treaty, a U-2 spy plane piloted by Gary Powers was shot down by the Soviet Union while undertaking a surveillance mission over Russian territory. The incident prompted a huge diplomatic dispute between the USSR and the USA, which also became rather heated

for the Japanese when it was revealed that the flight had originated from the Atsugi Airbase, not far south of Tokyo in Kanagawa Prefecture.⁸⁹

The more politically aware were also mindful that it was the communists in Japan who had originally stood in opposition to the aggressive militarist expansion of the nationalistic Shōwa government from the late 1920s onwards. Many of those who had held strong Marxist beliefs during this period and through into the war had been imprisoned and tortured by the *kenpeitai* military police, and were therefore seen in a heroic light after Japan's defeat, as martyrs to an oppressive regime. SCAP leader General MacArthur had initially courted controversy with his White House superiors by sympathising with this oppressed group in the early stages of the occupation, releasing communists and other political prisoners and encouraging expressions of political sentiment among the population at large. But with the beginning of the Cold War in 1949, as China came under the communist rule of Chairman Mao and America wrangled with Russia over control of Germany and Czechoslovakia, the new post-war administration began to clamp down on all those individuals and groups in Japan with strong left-wing sympathies. On 8 September, 1951, Japan signed the San Francisco Peace Treaty, thus formally ending World War II, and that same day entered into the Anpo Security Treaty with the United States, effectively making the country a client in America's Cold War policies. All those who opposed were left stewing with resentment for the rest of the decade, until it was time for the treaty to be renewed.

Critics of the planned extension saw their government as supine in the face of what was widely perceived to be the imperialist ambitions of its former occupier. But while Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP or *Jiyū Minshutō*, popularly abbreviated to *jimintō*) had already signed to extend the security agreement in the US in January 1960, he still had to pass the new revamped version through the Japanese parliament, or Diet. While Kishi attempted to push it past the opposing Japan Socialist Party (*Nihon Shakai-tō*), a huge public campaign built up, comprised of those increasingly angered by Kishi's authoritarian approach to such critical domestic issues.⁹⁰ (Having a convicted war criminal in charge of the country did nothing for the overall faith in democracy either: Kishi had been involved in politics since the mid-'30s, and was imprisoned for Class A war crimes in 1948 and prohibited from entering into public office until after the end of the occupation regime in 1952.) The conflict was soon to become even more emotive when the radical nationwide student body, the All-Japan Federation of Student Self-governing Associations (*Zen nihon gakusei jichikai sōrengō*), hereafter known by its more popular abbreviation of *Zengakuren*, pitched into the fray.

Zengakuren was officially established on 18 September, 1948 as one of General MacArthur's attempts at fostering among the Japanese a more active, more democratic sense of engagement with the political process, although he surely couldn't have dreamed of the knock-on effect this gesture would have around the rest of the world over the coming decades. The organisation originated after Tokyo University allowed its students to form their own self-governing association in January 1947, entrusted with the management of their dormitories, canteens, and student halls. By the end of its first year of going nationwide, the number of affiliated institutions of higher education reached 266, with roughly 60% of the nation's student population as members – some 222,581 students. From the very outset, the body became infused with the political ideologies of the Japan Communist Party (the JCP, or *Nihon kyōsan-tō*). Anti-imperialistic and anti-militaristic as they were, those championing communist ideologies were seen in a rather better light in Japan than in the Western world,⁹¹ and it therefore probably didn't cause as much concern for the general public as it did for the US occupiers that the chairman, vice-chairman, and chief secretary of the first *Zengakuren* executive committee were all signed-up members of the JCP. As the Cold War intensified, the Americans became increasingly concerned about such subversive left-wing elements gaining a sympathetic foothold in the educational establishments of their recently democratised protectorate. Issues from above to purge all known communist professors from the universities led to calls from the students for a nationwide strike and exam boycott during the summer of 1950. The occupation countered by attempting to prohibit all such demonstrations, and arrested several hundred *Zengakuren* members. Sure enough, further strikes and demonstrations ensued and, with Japan still under an occupation that wouldn't end for another two years, faith in America's espoused values of liberty and freedom of speech for all were called into question. The American involvement in attempting to quash the rise of communism in the Korean war between 1950-53 added further grist to the mill. In the meantime, schisms were growing between *Zengakuren* and the orthodox JCP, with the students claiming, among other things, that their overarching organisation wasn't radical enough if Japan was to hope for a similar people's revolution to those happening elsewhere in South East Asia. This type of inter- and intra-organisational infighting over issues regarding ideology and action would be a notable feature of the left-wing movement as it became ever more extremist over the course of the next decade. Fortunately, *Zengakuren* mainly managed to keep their noses clean for the rest of the '50s, but when the issue of the revamped Anpo Treaty raised its head, their masses were ready to rise and add their weight to the resistance.

As Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi attempted to push the treaty he'd signed earlier in 1960 through Diet, *Zengakuren* led a number of riots and demonstrations in opposition. On 15 June, 1960, in a massive protest outside the Diet building, several thousand students broke through the gates and became involved in a violent pitched battle with the police. During this skirmish, Michiko Kanba, a student from Tokyo University, was killed under mysterious circumstances, with the police claiming she was trampled in the crowds, but those sympathetic to the students asserting she was beaten to death. Despite vast opposition, the treaty nevertheless went into effect on 19 June. Kishi resigned just a month later, but across the streets and university campuses of Japan there was a feeling that the country had been sold out, and that the State would do anything to oppress dissenting voices. But even as Kanba became a *cause célèbre* for the young protesters and support for the movement from the general public grew firmer, the rift between *Zengakuren* and the JCP members started to grow.⁹²

This history should provide at least some backdrop to the war that was about to break out across the cinema screens of Japan during the '60s. While the major studios generally played it safe, the independent sector, represented by its component parts of art, exploitation and experimental film, readily engaged, and indeed took gleeful delight, in stirring up the already muddy political scene of the time. Just as sex was rapidly adopted as a means of expressing the vibrancy of youth culture in the politically-charged works produced and distributed by the Art Theatre Guild, and must have been at least part of the appeal, so too did politics; or at least references to political events and issues became more conspicuous in sex films. In all this, ATG had something of an advantage. Though ostensibly 'independent', the company was fortunate that it was formed and financed by Toho: its reputable ties with the industry and the fact that it was making what were considered to be 'art films' meant some thought Eirin considerably more lenient on its product than that of the *eroduction* industry.

Nevertheless, regardless of which sector of the market filmmakers were coming from, there were boundaries that were not to be crossed when it came to critiquing the system. It was just never clear exactly what these were. Witness the case of *Black Snow* (1965), a film that pushed its anti-American agenda so far that its director Tetsuji Takechi (10 December, 1912 – 26 July, 1988) ended up indicted for public obscenity, in the film industry's first such trial of the post-war era.

Before looking more closely at the film in question, it is best to take a closer look at the career of its maker. One of the first things that strikes one about the case of Tetsuji Takechi is the huge gulf in perception between the West and his homeland as to his status within the canon of pink's founding fathers.

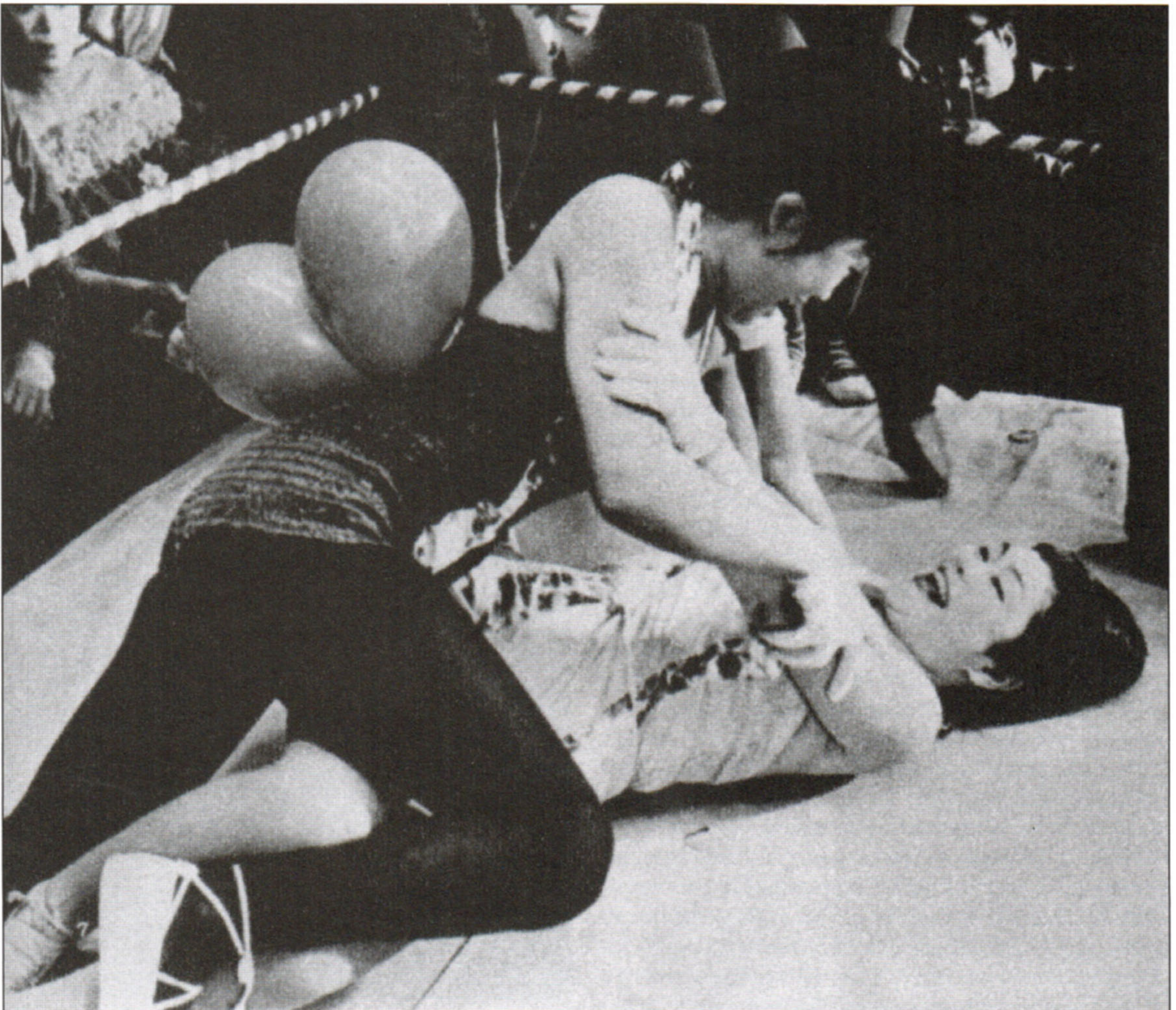


above: Chitose Kurenai as Shizue, in a scene preceding the 'obscene' sequence in Takechi's *Black Snow*, as she runs naked outside Yokota airbase. Note the actress is wearing a *maebari* to stay within censorship boundaries. ©Nikkatsu Corporation

Thomas Weisser writes, "Tetsuji Takechi is generally considered the father of Japanese porn,"⁹³ while Jack Hunter asserts, "The first major pink film is generally considered to be *Hakujitsumu* (*Daydream*, 1964), directed by Tetsuji Takechi."⁹⁴ Conversely, recent Japanese chronicles of the genre, such as the book *Pink & Porno* or the 'Pink Films History' page on the PG website,⁹⁵ exclude him and his films entirely, and no one in the industry today seems to treat him with much degree of significance, nor cite him as an influence. This was clearly not always the case, as he is interviewed at some length in *Kinema Junpô* magazine's early overview of the industry, in the *Pinku Eiga Hakusho* special edition in 1969.⁹⁶

Having died in 1988, it has also been some years since Takechi himself has been able to remind people of his own role in thrusting erotic material into the faces of the Japanese public. Until a complete retrospective of his oeuvre was held at Tokyo's Image Forum in late 2006, his name had been off the lips of critics and fans in his own country since his death, with seemingly only *Black Snow* from his initial run of seven titles from the '60s released on video domestically.

One reason for this differing emphasis is that Takechi was pretty much viewed as an outsider within the film industry in general, more a dilettante and a dabbler than a driving force. His background was originally in theatre, and he achieved some degree of renown in the '50s as a stage director, a critic and a strong advocate for modernising and breathing new life into traditional Kabuki through his own productions, known as Takechi Kabuki.⁹⁷ The Kabuki aesthetic is a tangible aspect of much of his work, in which colour, sound and body posture are treated more as expressive elements than narrative ones. That said, while Takechi hobnobbed with famous actors and literary figures like Yukio Mishima,⁹⁸ and even cast Tatsumi Hijikata – the founder of the Butoh genre of dance/performance art – in a small role in his *Dream of the Red Chamber* (1964), it would seem that the intentions behind many of his deviations from the traditional form were not quite as noble as one might assume. He had already put his name to the TV series *The Tetsuji Takechi Hour*, whose 13 parts featuring the Takechi Kabuki troupe performing various classics



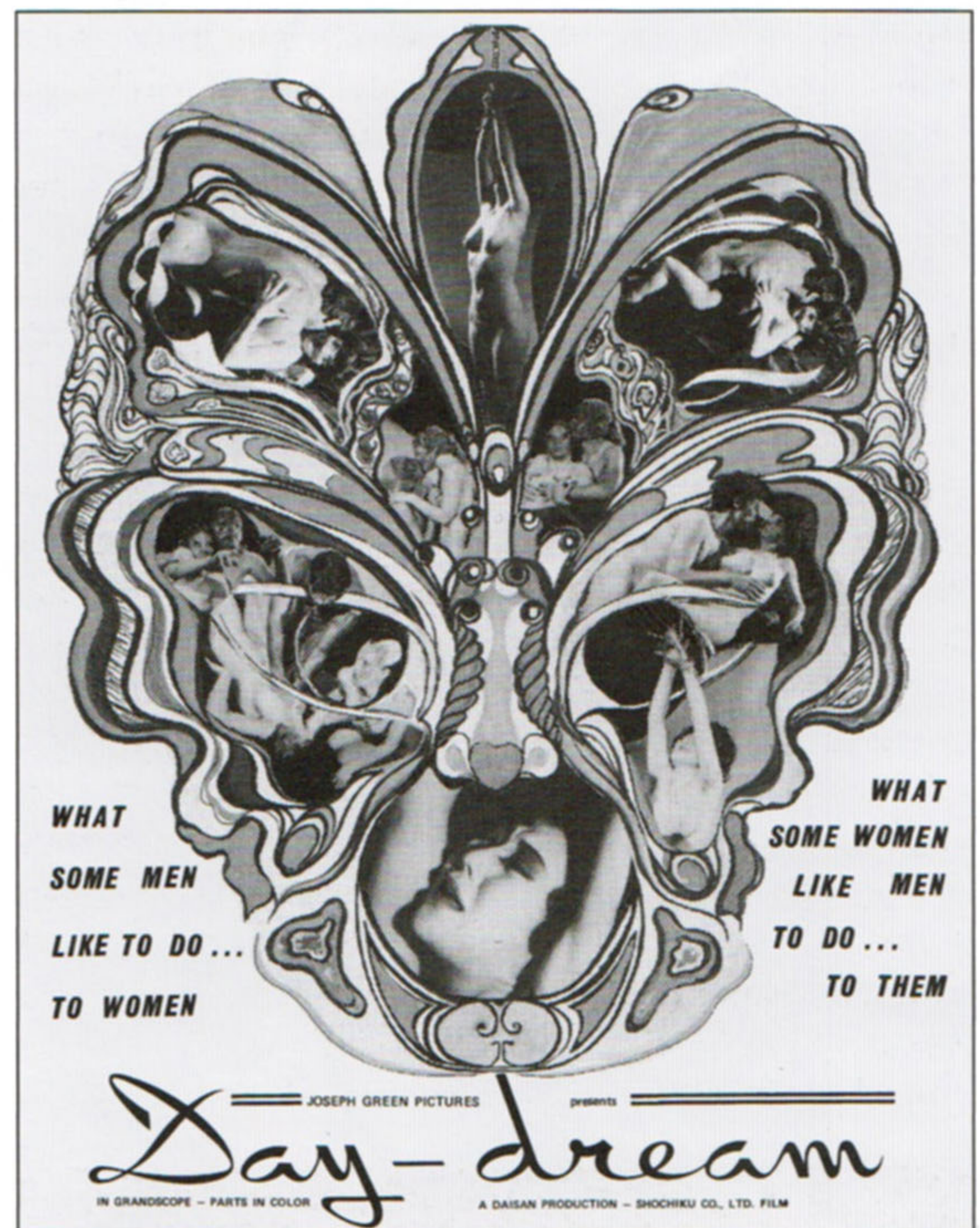
above: *Women...Oh Women!* (1963). Female wrestling was but one of the many delights in Tetsuji Takechi's early mondo movie about Tokyo nightlife.

such as *Chûshingura* ('The Story of the 47-Loyal Samurai') aired on Nihon TV from 4 December, 1956 to 26 February, 1957. With one of his breaks with tradition allowing women to perform on stage (including a certain Hideko Kawaguchi, who was to feature in his *Dream of the Red Chamber*), the show apparently gained a reputation for playing things quite close to the bone for its time. More importantly however, Donald Richie also states that before his first experiments in filmmaking he, "had gained a kind of notoriety for staging the more artistic of the local nude shows."⁹⁹

It is fairly clear anyway that he was no cineaste, and regarded the screen as a poor second cousin to the stage. During his career he only ever made about a dozen films, and furthermore, though these were all self-produced (most of his '60s work through a company known as Daisan Pro), the major studios distributed them in their own cinemas rather than through the *eroduction* distribution route (*Black Snow* was distributed by Nikkatsu). By modern definitions, they perhaps can't strictly be considered as belonging to the world of *pinku eiga*, but their boundary-pushing erotic and political content makes them central to any discussion of the genre's early history.¹⁰⁰

Because Takechi's films were all distributed by major companies, they were soon sold to overseas markets and thus enjoyed far greater visibility on the global stage than those of his filmmaking contemporaries. When Takechi's first film, *Women...Oh Women!* (1963) opened in Los Angeles on 18 September, 1964, a contemporary review stated, "Included in this examination of Japanese nightlife (with a special emphasis on women) are scenes of nude performances of Noh plays; women wrestlers, divers, and other sports-women; nuns; striptease dancers; fashion models; lesbians; transvestites; drug addicts; and the 'Geisha of Gion.'"¹⁰¹ In other words, it not only covered fairly similar territory to the 'mondo' or 'shockumentary' films of the time, but at 80 minutes in length and shot in Eastmancolor 'Shochiku GrandScope', it was far more lavishly produced than any of its *eroduction* contemporaries. (One can assume that these "nude performances of Noh plays" were filmed from the shows staged by Takechi himself.)

Though most overseas releases of such films saw them screened in the kind of grimy erotic cinemas that by and large fell beneath of the scope of the major review journals, *Variety* nevertheless covered *Daydream* in its 9 September, 1964 issue, and in 1966 the film was released onto the US grindhouse circuit in a version spiced up with crudely inserted red-tinted footage shot by its distributor Joseph Green (director of the 1962 zero-budgeter *The Brain That Wouldn't Die*), of a group of Western performers wearing nothing more than cloth masks frolicking around on an empty soundstage with a psychedelic backdrop.



Daydream is often promoted as being Takechi's masterpiece, with the director himself remaking it in a hardcore version in 1981, and directing a further sequel in 1987. All said however, it is essentially little more than a largely dialogue-less succession of set-pieces based on a series of sexy fantasies belonging to a busty nightclub chanteuse named Chieko (played by Kanako Michi) following a trip to the dentist's, all laid down to a soundtrack of *shamisen* twangs and eerie reverberating experimental noises. After a preliminary oral check-up she slumps into a nitrous-oxide-induced erotic nightmare in which she hallucinates being stripped nude and manhandled by the dentist and his nurse (the ubiquitous Yasuko Matsui), before being whisked away to his boudoir where he strings her up and suspends her from the ceiling after stripping her clothes off with a scalpel. A young man first seen in the surgery waiting room in the early scenes now enters Chieko's fantasies, gazing on from outside through the large balcony window, and initially impotent to free her – though eventually they make their escape, pursued by the dastardly dental surgeon through a department store populated only by mannequins.

Daydream marked the beginning of a lifelong cinematic love affair between Takechi and the prose of the highly-regarded modernist author Junichirô Tanizaki that would continue with his next film, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, and even further into the '80s, with *Oiran* (1983). The enthusiasm doesn't appear to have been reciprocated on Tanizaki's side however. According to Richie, "Tanizaki, who had wanted so much to raise the standards of early Japanese cinema,

(courtesy of Something Weird Video Inc. and Box Office International Pictures)



above: Kanako Michi in *Daydream*, a film that outraged the esteemed author of the original source material, Junichirô Tanizaki. ©Daisan Pro

was publicly furious at this example of their decline."¹⁰² The author died in 1965 at the age of seventy nine, shortly after *Dream of the Red Chamber* hit the cinemas. Anyhow, both of the original stories of Takechi's first two adaptations are considered minor works, with *Daydream* initially appearing as a short story in the magazine *Chûô kôron* ('Central Opinion') in September 1926.

More crucially however, *Daydream* also began a lifelong conflict between Takechi and the guardians of public decency. Though passed by Eirin, by virtue of having a major studio behind it the film ended up playing to a considerably wider audience than it perhaps should have. Donald Richie wrote at the time that *Daydream*, "differed from other trashy sex-pot pictures only in that it went so much further, that it was based upon a story by Junichirô Tanizaki (one of

Japan's most honoured authors) and that it was sold as art rather than sex. This last meant that it went into the first-run theatres and that many saw it who otherwise would not."¹⁰³ The complaints soon came flooding in from various regional groups: parent-teacher associations concerned that children had managed to sneak into cinemas to see it; the country's equivalent of the RSPCA due to a scene of a cat lapping up spilt fluids after one of Michi's tussles with her assailant; even the Japan Dental Association, fearing that the film brought the profession into disrepute. In the meantime, *Dream of the Red Chamber* was ready for release, so in an attempt to ward off any further possible controversy, Eirin removed about 45 minutes of footage. According to Richie in the same article, "the released picture turned out to be a short series of bath-tub scenes; Shochiku had to swell the running-time by showing it on a double-bill with a hastily acquired import, *Saucie Aussie*."

By the time of his next picture, Takechi had thus established a reputation for himself as something of a troublemaker. But *Black Snow's* subversion went beyond the merely carnal. Set in a ramshackle prefab brothel lying in the penumbra of the Yokota Airbase, *Black Snow* tells the story of a young man, Jirô (the name has the implicit meaning "next son") who, after spying on his mother with a black serviceman, stabs and murders him outside a jazz bar, later running amok and slaying his mother too after caving in under the weight of hysterical guilt. Carted off by the military police, the film ends poetically in a flurry of snowflakes as he is gunned down by a firing squad.

The film opens with its credit sequence appearing over a static shot of the prostitute mother lying prone on her back with all the bored aloofness of Manet's *Olympia*, and the prostrate figure of the hulking Afro-American GI stretched over her to embody the foreign forces of oppression (while also serving the more pragmatic purpose of masking her nakedness). As the camera slowly pans along her bare flank, she raises her arm above her head to reveal a dense thicket of underarm hair – provocative stuff in a country where the one main taboo in the sexual arena is the onscreen portrayal of pubic hair. But there was worse to follow.

Black Snow's offence was the manner in which it drew attention to the presence of American soldiers on Japanese soil. Leaving no doubt as to Takechi's intent, the film is permeated by the maddening cacophony of fighter jets, a recurrent cinematic shorthand for the foreign military presence, at least since Tomu Uchida's scathing critique of Japan's new democratic values in his 1955 film *A Hole of My Own Making*. In one scene after the original murder, the disturbed son escorts one of the more sympathetic girls working alongside his mother on a date to watch a suitably aggressive American film in a near-deserted

theatre. She squirms in pleasure as his hands begin to stray, both of them aroused by the sound of gunshots blaring from the screen.

But what was actually 'obscene' about the film? While depictions of the Allied occupation forces were forbidden under the SCAP censors, similar restrictions should no longer have been applicable following Japan's ostensible return to self-rule. The film also manages to fall far short of the final frontier of the pornographer's downward trawl, avoiding any forbidden genital 'hair shots' – though notably in several scenes the mother makes a great show of powdering her armpits to disguise the hair, a metaphor for an evident truth airbrushed from public discussion.

The attentions of the police centred on one extended 3-minute sequence that epitomises the level of overkill found throughout the film, in which Shizue – the young and pure-hearted daughter (the 'shizu' character in her name means quiet) of the hired driver Horita – fleeing from the brothel after being roughed up by none other than the self-declared communist character Kurose, runs naked along the perimeter fence of Yokota airbase, the planes screeching deafeningly overhead. Takechi was ceremoniously hauled off to court, where he claimed in his defence, "I admit there are many nude scenes in the film, but they are psychological nude scenes symbolising the defencelessness of the Japanese people in the face of the American invasion. Prompted by the CIA and the US Army they say my film is immoral. This is of course an old story that has been going on for centuries. When they suppressed Kabuki plays during the Edo period, forbidding women to act, because of prostitution, and young actors, because of homosexuality, they said it was to preserve public morals. In fact it was a matter of rank political suppression. In fact it is a matter of rank political suppression."¹⁰⁴

Support from intellectual and artistic circles was strong, with both Yukio Mishima and Nagisa Ōshima rallying to his cause in the name of artistic freedom. In fact Ōshima, who had spent the past four years working in TV and radio, cited the case as one of the reasons for his return to filmmaking: "There had never been a year in which film had received so many attacks from the outside. That is why Japanese film needed me. *Pleasures of the Flesh* was my response to that."¹⁰⁵

The trial's second hearing finally came to an end in 1969, with Takechi cleared of all obscenity charges. By this time he had written a couple of books pertaining to the case, *Eros Accused* (1967) and *My Art. Life. Women* (1968), and quickly dashed off a further three films – an erotic version of the classic of Heian literature by Shikibu Murasaki, *Tale of Genji* (1966), *Post-War Cruelty Story* (1968), and *Floating World Cruel Story* (1968).¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, the damage to his reputation had been done. Newspapers refused to advertise his subsequent films, and he retreated from the film world, returning

briefly and almost imperceptibly with *Madam Scandal* in 1973,¹⁰⁷ before launching three further large-screen assaults on public sensibilities in the '80s. But more about these later.

Coming from a highbrow, intellectual and moneyed background as he did, Takechi is better described as a reactionary than a revolutionary. If there were problems rocking the modern state of Japan, then he identified the rot as coming from outside the nation rather than engrained within its very substrate, as many of the more radical directors who more genuinely inhabited the *eroduction* world saw it. Still, with its scenes of violent sexual subjugation serving as a metaphor for the strong arm of a corrupt higher authority, *Black Snow* was typical in other ways of many a political pink film.

Sincere as the filmmakers' concerns might have been, the main stumbling block for Western viewers in taking their messages seriously was that this conceptual battle between repressive sex and repressive state control was one that was all too often played out using female bodies. Besides, does merely referencing political issues amount to any real intellectual engagement with them? What, for instance, does a film like Toshio Okuwaki's *Naked Pursuit* (1968) really tell us about the student struggles? Its narrative effectively amounts to little more than a succession of cat-and-mouse assaults on a young woman by a desperate *Zengakuren* activist as he chases his prey across a deserted island of volcanic sands and bare forests. With little in the way of dialogue to intrude upon the endless scenes of actress Mari Aoki's thrashing legs and shredded lingerie (livened up with an ostentatious use of the zoom lens and hypnotic slow-motion sequences accompanied by an echoing atonal soundtrack, as if Tarkovsky had directed *I Spit on Your Grave*), the events unfolding salaciously on its canvas are lent only the scantest degree of legitimacy through an early flashback of the young man throttling a police officer, superimposed over authentic footage of a student protest.

The casual modern viewer is most likely going to find the reference rather perplexing, but it does reflect, to some degree, what was happening on the streets at the time, as student clashes with the *kidōtai*¹⁰⁸ riot police became more and more frequent and more and more heated. The escalating involvement of America in Vietnam and the country's prolonged aerial bombardment from 1965 onwards soon became one of the radical left-wing movement's most critical issues. The later inserts of Vietnam war footage in Okuwaki's film reinforce the motif of bodily invasion, also articulated in other, non-pink, titles such as the psychedelic horror movie *Goke, Body Snatcher from Hell*, released by Shochiku that same year. *Naked Pursuit* clearly touches more than a few raw nerves, but would one go as far as labelling it 'a political film'? Perhaps not.

NAKED PURSUIT



DESPERATELY SHE RAN, TRYING TO ESCAPE THE BURNING DESIRE SHE KNEW WOULD SOON DESTROY HER INNOCENCE.

ONLY BOXOFFICE FILMS WOULD DARE TO BRING YOU THIS FILM OF UNREVEALED ECSTASY



A BOXOFFICE INTERNATIONAL FILM

above: Toshio Okuwaki's reductive *Naked Pursuit* (1968), a film far better known overseas than perhaps it should be, due to its relatively widespread theatrical distribution in the US. (courtesy of Something Weird Video Inc. and Box Office International Pictures)

Nevertheless, the genre did have certain advantages for those who wished to push their worldview. The fast turnaround between shooting and exhibition allowed its makers to slip in footage of recent demonstrations (with a focus on manifestations of police brutality) and internationally significant events while they were still at the forefront of the popular imagination. The two violent anti-Vietnam protests in late 1967, known as the Haneda Incidents after the airport where they took place – the second erupting as protesters attempted to stop then Prime Minister Eisaku Satō from departing for the US to meet President Lyndon Johnson¹⁰⁹ – worked their way into several films from the period. (It should be mentioned that Satō was actually former Prime Minister Kishi's younger brother, appointed to the post of head of government in 1964 following the resignation of Kishi's successor, Hayato Ikeda, due to ill health; given Kishi's own dubious wartime background, this dynastic application of democracy was hardly likely to placate the left).

As pieces of agitprop, pink films had their own legs. Images of protests against the war or other forms of social injustice might not have been transmitted nationally on television, or at least if they were, it would be in a heavily editorialised format. But when spliced amongst the action of an adult film, they made the struggles seem far more immediate and intense to a

Behind the Pink Curtain

wider audience of students and blue-collar workers spread across the nation. And just as mimesis lies at the heart of pornography, so it does with propaganda. The spectacle of bodies in motion, whether individual bodies engaged in sexual activity or larger collective bodies of uniformed ranks of troops or rioting mobs whose individual members act as one, provokes a subliminal response in its viewers, inviting them, inciting them to come join in the fun.

Despite the scarcity of films from the period that remain available for viewing, it is nevertheless possible to infer from written sources that movies such as *Naked Pursuit*, even when they only really paid lip service to contemporary political issues, were not really the norm, and most of the genre's filmmakers steered clear of direct action politics or any real engagement with the issues they raised. But there were those in the *eroduction* world who were closer to the revolution that boiled over and engulfed the streets of Tokyo, and none were as bloody-minded in their shoe-horning of radical politics into the format as Kōji Wakamatsu and his cohorts.

Wakamatsu and his close collaborator from the mid-'60s onwards, Masao Adachi, are still paying their dues for their close links with the more radical factions that emerged from the *Zengakuren* movement, with both currently barred from entering the United States. In William R. Farrell's fascinating *Blood and Rage: The Story of the Japanese Red Army*, Adachi's face is included on a reproduction of a Japanese police wanted poster along with those of other more notorious figures linked with international terrorist activities during the '70s, including the Japanese Red Army leader Fusako Shigenobu, and Kōzō Okamoto, the sole survivor of the three perpetrators of the infamous 1972 massacre at Lod Airport, near Tel Aviv. The remarkable paths of both Wakamatsu and Adachi, and the extraordinary films they left behind while travelling along it, form the basis of the next two chapters.

Footnotes

⁸⁸ *Nippon: The Land and Its People*. Tokyo: Nippon Steel Human Resources Development/Gakusei Publishing. pg 73.

⁸⁹ Farrell, William R. *Blood and Rage: The Story of the Japanese Red Army*. Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1990. I have referred to this book for most of the background information regarding the birth of the left-wing movement and the Japanese Red Army.

⁹⁰ Hane, Mikiso. *Modern Japan: A Historical Survey*. Colorado: Westview, 2001. pg 387.

⁹¹ To this day, with around 400,000 members, the JCP counts as one of the largest non-ruling communist parties in the world.

⁹² It was this rift that was the subject of Nagisa Ōshima's film *Night and Fog in Japan* (1960).

⁹³ Weisser, Thomas. *Japanese Cinema Encyclopedia: The Sex Films*. pg 67.

⁹⁴ Hunter, Jack. *Eros in Hell*. pg 7.

⁹⁵ www2u.biglobe.ne.jp/~p-g/history.htm.

⁹⁶ *Pinku eiga hakusho: Kinema junpō henshū*. Kinema Junpō-sha, 1969. pg 70-83.

97 Takechi expressed his vision for a new modern Kabuki in a number of articles, one of which is reprinted in English in the *Asian Theatre Journal*, Volume 20, Number 1, Spring 2003, pg 12-24. University of Hawaii Press.

98 Takechi's many publications include the book *Yukio Mishima: His Death and His View of the Kabuki* (Mishima Yukio: Shi to sono Kabuki-kan, 1971), the collection of critical essays *The Dawn of the Kabuki* (Kabuki no reimei, 1955), and *Tradition and Disruption* (Dentô to danzetsu, 1969).

99 Richie, Donald. "Japan." *Censorship* no.2 Spring 65 pg 29-32.

100 According to Minoru Murai in his book *Hadaka no yume nendaiki: boku no pinku eiga-shi*, Takechi's *Black Snow* was originally financed by Shintohe (Takechi's fee is said to have been 5 Million yen). Takechi, afraid that the pink eiga circuit was too limited, switched to Nikkatsu as distributor, however, to guarantee a wider release. Thanks to Roland Domenig for pointing out this information.

101 American Film Institute of Motion Pictures Catalogue 1961-70. pg 1241.

102 Richie, Donald. *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film*. pp210-11. Richie is referring to Tanizaki's early involvement with the Pure Film movement (jun'eigageki undô) in 1910. For more detail on this see Bernardi, Joanne. *Writing in Light* and LaMarre, Thomas. *Shadows on the Screen* (University of Michigan, 2005).

103 Richie, Donald. "Japan." *Censorship* no.2 Spring 65 pg 29-32.

104 Desser, pg 99, quoted from Buruma, Ian. *A Japanese Mirror: Heroes and Villains in Japanese Culture* (London: Phoenix 1984), pg 57. This in turn has been translated from the July 1965 issue of *Eiga Geijutsu* magazine.

105 Ôshima, Nagisa. "In Korea and Vietnam", *Eiga Geijutsu*, 1965. Reproduced in *Cinema, Censorship, and the State*. pg 100.

106 The JMDB also lists the title *Genjitsu* (*Parhelia*) starring Ryûhei Uchida, apparently inspired by Sôseki Natsume's 1908 short story collection *Ten Nights of Dreams* (*Yumejûya*). However, the exact nature of this work is unclear – the film was not included in the 2006 retrospective, nor is it mentioned in any of the filmographies included in the publicity booklets for *Oiran* or the *Daydream* remake.

107 Another film which was not included in the 2006 retrospective. The film was not distributed by a major studio, but a company named NCC.

108 The Japanese for the name of this special anti-elite unit translates as Mobile Police. Anime director Mamoru Oshii makes many allusions to the *kidôtai* (and the student movement as a whole) in the titles of *Mobile Police Force Patlabor* (*Kidô keisatsu patoreibâ*, first movie in 1989) and *Ghost in the Shell* (*Kôkaku kidôtai*, 1995).

109 Documentarian Shinsuke Ogawa made *Eye Witness Report: Chronicle of the Haneda Struggle* (1967) as a visual record of this second clash in November. See Nornes, Abé Mark, *Forest of Pressure: Ogawa Shinsuke and Postwar Japanese Documentary* (University of Minnesota Press), pg 50-53 for more information on this film.



above: A return to traditional values, in Tetsuji Takechi's *Floating World Cruelty Story* (1968). ©Takechi Pro



Eri Ashikawa as the crucified lover in Kôji Wakamatsu's manic *eroduction improv*, *Violent Virgin* (1969).
©Wakamatsu Pro

Emerging from the Underground: Wakamatsu Pro

Kôji Wakamatsu is a difficult figure to place within the broad history of Japanese cinema. While his films screened at a number of festivals in mainland Europe in the late '60s and early '70s – which in itself is enough to distinguish him from his contemporaries in the *eroduction* world – the general climate and context in which they were made, along with those he produced for other directors through his company Wakamatsu Pro, was not one treated with much significance by many Western writers at the time. There were those in France, like Noël Burch and Max Tessier, who wrote seriously about those few Japanese erotic films that began to appear in Europe in the late '60s and '70s, and consequently it has been this country that has provided a home for two noteworthy retrospectives of Wakamatsu's films with the director himself in attendance, at the 1998 *L'Étrange Festival* in Paris, and as part of a season entitled 'Sex Is Politics', in the town of Saint-Denis in 2006. But, clearly uncomfortable with the spectacle of sexual violence against women, English-language commentators seemed at a loss when it came to interpreting the new phenomenon of the '60s, either ignoring it or dismissing it out of hand. Few took time to engage with the films even on the level at which they were intended to be consumed. It's a stance Donald Richie has maintained until this day, as is spelled out by this classic snub of Wakamatsu relayed in a 1990 entry from his journals, published in 2004: "He makes embarrassing soft-core psychodrama (or used to), and Noël Burch led the French into seeing great cinematic depths in *Violated Angels*. It occurs to no one that the reason for making it (nurses skinned alive) was non-cinematic. So Koji was treated as though his junk meant something."¹¹⁰

Junk or not, Wakamatsu's films do mean something, or at the very least are representative of something. While in the Japanese film industry at large he may be better regarded more as a particularly canny producer than for the level of craftsmanship to be found in his films, even in the capacity of a director his early work is stylistically distinct enough to at least merit some consideration. At its best, it is direct and abrasive, seething with an infectious energy and electrifying *zeitgeist*, its stark power immediately appreciable, even if hidden deeper meanings prove maddeningly elusive. At the very least his films serve as socio-historical documents; not only visual testimonies to an era of new sexual frankness and a deep-rooted uncertainty in which oblivion seemed to lurk around the corner; the development of Wakamatsu's oeuvre, along with that of

his close friend and ally Masao Adachi, also runs parallel with the development of the student movement and the growth of the radical left-wing. Those looking back at this turbulent period and trying to fathom just how extremist political groups like the Communist League Red Army Faction (*Kyôsanshugisha dômei sekigun-ha*) – hereafter referred simply as the Red Army Faction – and the closely-related groups of the Japanese Red Army (JRA, or *Nihon Sekigun*) and the United Red Army (URA, or *Rengo Sekigun*) developed as they did might well find clues in titles like *Sex Play* (1969), *Shinjuku Mad* (1970), *Ecstasy of the Angels* (1972), and the infamous *Red Army / PFLP: Declaration of World War* (1971).

It is immediately clear to the modern viewer that there is something very unique about these films that sets them apart from run-of-the-mill softcore. Wakamatsu himself denies that he ever really made *pinku eiga*, and indeed, it would be difficult to describe much of the output of Wakamatsu Pro, especially those films made by Masao Adachi and Atsushi Yamatoya, as representing the typical face of the genre. "All in all you can say that our films were underground films with a sexy touch. At least, that's how we saw them,"¹¹¹ Wakamatsu later claimed. The *eroduction* world just provided a distribution system for him and his collaborators to exploit, and they therefore needed to tailor the content of the works, to some extent, to fit its requirements. The Kôji Wakamatsu titles best known today seem to bear this out, though this is also due to the director himself owning the rights to the majority of the hundred or so films in his back catalogue, allowing him to be selective about which titles today find themselves most regularly screened and accessible on DVD. Wakamatsu will also concede that there were many films he made in his heyday that are no longer readily available that were, in his own words, "not very interesting". His filmography is full of titles, such as *White Man-Made Beauty* (1966), *Black Narcissus of Lust* (1967), and *Kama Sutra: Love Technique* (1970), that were more directly intended for the sex film market, and made mainly to earn money to finance more adventurous, experimental or personal projects. He also proved more adept than most when it came to selling his films to foreign distributors.

How successful really was Wakamatsu then? According to the director himself, "My films fared pretty well. Troublesome were the films of Masao Adachi. Since nobody wanted to buy them, we added my name on the billboard and advertised them as joint productions."¹¹² However, according to Daisuke Asakura, the



above: The lurid crime thriller *Red Crime* (1964) is the earliest Wakamatsu film still in existence. ©Wakamatsu Pro

president of Kokuei – the company that produced some of his earliest works – Wakamatsu Pro's films, "weren't too popular... which is understandable because the scripts were written by people like Masao Adachi and Atsushi Yamatoya. But I think Waka was the first 'name value' in the world of Pink Films... in a sense, he's the one who lead the world of Pink Film."¹¹³

There are other benchmarks of success apart from commercial performance, and in many ways Wakamatsu can be described as the most significant figure to emerge from the *eroduction* field. Not only has his name been cited as an influence by successive generations of pink directors, but he has also achieved a unique level of crossover success during the time Wakamatsu Pro was active, with his films accepted by critics and intellectuals from outside the *seijin eiga* world, including such pivotal figures from the creative avant-garde as Shûji Terayama, Jûrô Kara, Nagisa Ôshima and the ATG producer Kinshirô Kuzui. So how exactly did this bumpkin from a poor uneducated farming background in the north of Japan make the leap from the low-budget sex film market to the prestigious Cannes Film Festival, play a pivotal role in the most prominent foreign co-production of the day, and wind up tangentially involved in the pro-Palestinian cause?

Wakamatsu's rise to prominence is all the more remarkable when you take into account his humble roots. Born 1 April, 1936, in the small town of Wakuya in the rural Miyagi prefecture of the mountainous

northern Tôhoku region, he was one of several sons of a farmer who specialised in horse breeding. His relationship with his father was turbulent, as it was with his teachers at school, and though naturally a bright student, he soon let his studies slip after discovering a channel for his energies playing baseball. After being thrown out of agricultural college due to a violent altercation with a fellow member of the judo club (who was later to become, somewhat ironically given Wakamatsu's problematic relationship with figures of authority throughout his life, a police officer), at the age of seventeen he found himself, like so many of his generation, packing his bags and heading down to Tokyo in search of work.¹¹⁴

Wakamatsu's entry into the world of filmmaking was a convoluted process. After his initial arrival in the city, he worked in a variety of lowly positions, on construction sites, at a confectionery company making *daifuku*, and in a bar, before he somehow became involved in a local yakuza group. Soon, at the age of twenty three, a brush with the law led to a six-month spell in Hachiôji prison. Wakamatsu emerged from the ordeal with an even deeper mistrust of authority and a resolve to tackle it in a more constructive fashion that wouldn't end up with him behind bars for a second time. The most obvious solution was through fiction. After all, engaging in real-life crimes such as killing politicians, policemen and other such figures of repressive authority tends to land one in trouble; committing the same act as fantasy in prose or on film

seemed a safer way of expressing feelings of dissatisfaction with the current state of society. Wakamatsu's initial plan was to vent his spleen by writing a novel based on his life story so far, but not long into it he discovered that his early departure from the education system made this a trickier task than he'd first envisaged. Might his talents perhaps be better suited to a life in the movies?

It was then, and indeed still is now, a customary practice for film crews in Tokyo to ask permission from local yakuza groups rather than the police when it came to location shooting in a particular quarter. And so Wakamatsu's first brush with the film world came through his old mafia connections, with him working as a scout in the Shinjuku area of Tokyo, watching over the crew and standing nearby the shoot to indicate that they had mob approval. During this time he approached one of the television producers whom he was monitoring and asked to be taken on as an apprentice.

Within a very short time he was working as a director for Nihon TV, a route taken by many pink directors before embarking on their big-screen careers. As Wakamatsu tells it, his next step up the ladder was characteristically serendipitous. A huge row, after a last-minute order to change the script and all the cast members on a project he was then working on, led to Wakamatsu attacking his producer with a chair and storming off set. Only briefly out of work, he received an out-of-the-blue phone call from an actors' agent in a hurry to find a director for a new film project. What kind of film did they want made? "They gave me a free rein as long as it included some shots of women's naked backs and some love scenes. At that time the label *pinku eiga* didn't exist. The censorship exercised by Eirin was very severe, to the point where you couldn't show pubic hair nor women's nipples: so you were obliged to film naked women from behind. I asked him if it was worth the bother, but he insisted."¹¹⁵ And so, in 1963, Wakamatsu came to direct his first theatrical work, entitled *Sweet Trap*.

Like many of Wakamatsu's early productions, *Sweet Trap* no longer exists in a viewable form. What appears to be his earliest film in existence, and his seventh as a director, *Red Crime* (1964) tells the story of a podgy salesman named Mizushima (played by the actor Takuzô Kamiyama in his first and only leading role)¹¹⁶ who, when visiting the household of the Tsuchiya family, disturbs an assault on the lady of the house, Yûko (*Daydream's* Kanako Michi), by her brother-in-law Toshio. Coming to her rescue, he nevertheless finds himself on the wrong side of the law when Yûko's husband, an influential public prosecutor, frames him by giving false evidence in order to protect Toshio, his younger brother. When Mizushima is betrayed to the police by his girlfriend Akemi, who remains unconvinced of his innocence, he returns to visit Yûko and, after making love, the couple decide to flee together across the countryside, with the film climaxing



above: Tragically, intriguing images such as this one from the 1963 production *Savage Women* are the only traces left of Wakamatsu's earliest titles. ©Kokuei

in a memorable confrontation on the rim of a volcano crater. Playing far more conventionally than the director's later, more enigmatic meditations on violence, subversive politics and sexual hysteria, if *Red Crime* can be linked to the new *eroduction* genre in any way, it is more by dint of its low-budget production circumstances than its actual content. With its lovers-on-the-run scenario reminiscent of Godard's *À bout de souffle* (1960), it in fact owes more to crime thriller conventions, and there are none of the overt addresses to contemporary political issues that would characterise his self-produced work.

A myth that seems to have permeated through many English-language accounts of Wakamatsu's career is that his early films were made for Nikkatsu. In fact they were produced and distributed by a number of different small independent companies, with the director paid only a flat fee. *Red Crime* was one of a number of films made for Nihon Cinema, from whom *Dry Skin* (1964) also survives. Kokuei also produced several, including *Savage Women* (1963), *Sexy Operation: Playgirl* (1963), *Lead Gravestone* (1964), and Wakamatsu's early masterpiece *Chronicle of an Affair*, whose impact on the genre we have already considered.



above: Poster art for *Continuing Japan Assault Dark History: Tyrant*, starring Miki Hayashi and Osamu Yamashita, himself the director of a number of pink films during the '60s. ©Kokuei

With many of these films proving immensely popular and all the money going to the producers, it didn't take long for Wakamatsu to realise that it would be a lot more profitable to produce his work through his own company. *Chronicle of an Affair*, one of the last films he made prior to the founding of Wakamatsu Pro, had drawn a lot of attention, mainly due to its sensational scene of Midori Chigusa fleeing naked through the snow from her assailants, and it went on to earn Kokuei a large amount of money. Even after Wakamatsu had moved on, Kokuei continued to capitalise on its success. After Kan Mukai's follow-up, *Continuation: Chronicle of an Affair* (1966), a second sequel, released in 1967 and the first full-colour pink film, *New: Chronicle of an Affair* (directed by Osamu Yamashita, who played the lead in Wakamatsu's *Continuing Japan Assault Dark History: Tyrant* and co-scripted *Violated Angels* alongside Masao Adachi and Jûrô Kara the same year) even more or less reprised the scandalous sequence from *Black Snow* (two years after it had landed Tetsuji Takechi in court and with the case still in progress). In a climactic sequence, the film's photographic model protagonist is dragged out of a nightclub by two GI's, roughed up and stripped bare in their car as they drive around the outside fence of their military base.

It might have seemed a bold move for an individual director to set up his own company at this time, especially as, unlike Ôshima, Imamura or similar figures active at the time, Wakamatsu had never been attached to a major studio and in fact operated in an entirely different shade of the filmmaking spectrum, totally invisible to the mainstream. However, in the early *eroduction* world, it was something of the norm. Not that this made it any easier for the director. Not only did the responsibility of employing his own staff now fall to him and him alone, he also needed to raise the necessary funds for each individual title to go into production, and if the project wasn't funded by a company with its own distribution links, he needed to find exhibitors to sell the finished film to. The pink film industry was, generally speaking, a conservative world, and so going independent didn't necessarily equate to more artistic liberty if it transpired that in the end one couldn't get the film screened. The only real way to do something a little more innovative within this format (if indeed the *eroduction* can even be described as having a format in its formative years) was to present a different script to the company financing the project than what was actually going to be filmed. This later became a fairly common occurrence in this production sector, though such practices were potentially very risky; if the film flopped, then one could tick off this particular source from the list of future funders. Nonetheless, this is exactly what Wakamatsu did in the case of his first independent production, and when Kantô Movie, the company that commissioned it, saw the end results, they were livid.¹¹⁷

Far from a flop however, Wakamatsu's eighteenth work, *Secret Acts Behind Walls* (also known as *Skeleton in the Closet*), became one of the genre's greatest money-spinners of the time, and the first example from this world to cause a blip on overseas radars when a further set of freak occurrences saw the film screening at the 1965 Berlin Film Festival. Barely two years after starting work at the lowliest rung of the filmmaking ladder, the event saw the names of both Wakamatsu and his film not only spread across the lips of international film festival juries, but also bandied about in the domestic press, and not necessarily for the film's artistic qualities, as after *Daydream* it became the second big scandal the Japanese film industry faced that year.

With its bleak, alienating tenement block location, *Secret Acts Behind Walls* must have appeared to audiences at Berlin like a darker, more twisted version of *She and He*, the Susumu Hani film that, along with Imamura's *Insect Woman*, had won Sachiko Hidari the Best Actress award at the same festival just the previous year. In Hani's film, the concrete setting served as an emotional prison for the newly married wife stuck at home all day while her husband abandons her for the office. In Wakamatsu's film the block is a hive of sexual frustration and stultified political ambition, revolving

around several characters hidden anonymously amongst the hordes of prattling housewives. These include a former communist party member and his lover, both of whom retreat into the world of heroin addiction in disgust at the war in Vietnam, and a young student (played by Wakamatsu regular Masayoshi Nogami) who stays sealed in the claustrophobic confines of his bedroom, studying ardently for his university entrance exams – or at least, this is what his parents think. In reality he spends as much time flicking through the pages of pornographic magazines as his textbooks, seeking further release from exam stress by spying on his neighbours. Feeling increasingly unsettled by his sister's nubile presence, he later sexually assaults her as she is taking a shower, before he flees and breaks into the apartment of a neighbouring housewife, whom he also attacks and murders.

Secret Acts Behind Walls is indeed confrontational stuff, and certainly not an image of itself that Japan, feeling self-conscious and proud after the previous year's Olympics, wanted screened to a wider world. It proved quite a talking point at the festival, as Wakamatsu remembers it: "I guess the opening scene was pretty shocking for a European audience. You know, the scene where the man with the keloid scar and his lover have sex in front of Stalin's picture. This image and the image of the atomic bomb took many by surprise."¹¹⁸ In this particular scene, as the woman

caresses her lover's scar after shooting up, she mutters, "You are an emblem of Hiroshima, an emblem of Japan, an anti-war emblem."¹¹⁹

The reaction in Europe was nothing compared to that at home. The Japan Film Producers Alliance (*Nihon eiga seisakusha renmei*, also known as *Eiren*, and certainly not the same as the censorship body *Eirin*), the organisation entrusted with submitting films to overseas festivals, was in uproar that the nation's grimy underbelly was being exposed in such a flagrant fashion for all the world to see, especially given that the film hailed from such a disreputable sector of the market, and had been chosen in preference to any of the major studio titles put forward. (Ironically, according to one report published in *Cahiers du cinéma* at the time, one of these rejected submissions, Shôhei Imamura's *Intentions of Murder*, had been judged 'too risqué' by the actual festival programmers.¹²⁰ Other films put forward included Tomu Uchida's *Straits of Hunger* and Yasuzô Masumura's *Hoodlum Soldier*). They were also furious that, only a year after ordinary Japanese citizens were permitted to travel outside of the country for the first time since the end of the war, a man whom they considered to be a pornographic filmmaker from a gangster background was given an open ticket to fly to Germany.¹²¹ Numerous critics labelled *Secret Acts Behind Walls* a 'national disgrace film' (*kokujoku eiga*), with its most vocal opponent



above: A national disgrace: The bomb-scarred communist (Takao Yoshizawa) and his girlfriend are just two of the characters who engage in *Secret Acts Behind Walls*.
©Wakamatsu Pro



above: Kôji Wakamatsu: Portrait of the artist as a young man. ©Wakamatsu Pro

being the prominent Kyûshirô Kusakabe, who invited Wakamatsu for a severe dressing down on a prominent national public broadcast.

Wakamatsu himself never had anything to do with the decision to screen the film overseas, later explaining how "a German guy from Hansa-Film happened to see the film during a visit to Tokyo. He bought the film and submitted it to the Berlin Film Festival. To select this film as the Japanese entry to the competition was the decision of the festival organisers. In fact, I didn't even know the film had been submitted to the festival. I had nothing to do with that at all... Strangely, instead of directing their criticism against the Berlin festival organizers they turned against me."¹²²

Another industry figure put out by the whole affair was Tôwa Trading Partnership's Kashiko Kawakita who, after returning from Berlin, watched all of Wakamatsu's previous films to get a measure of this new upstart, or at least this is what Wakamatsu claims. "When we met at a party shortly after Berlin Film Festival, she behaved as if she detested me."¹²³ Nevertheless, even as the major film studios declared they'd no longer submit films to Berlin, *Secret Acts Behind Walls* went on to benefit enormously from all the hype, and other figures within

the industry began to sit up and take notice. Nagisa Ôshima made the bold claim that filmmakers like Wakamatsu were exactly what the industry needed, while in his guise as a critic, the experimental playwright Shûji Terayama raved over *The Sun Is Redder Than Blood* (1966), Wakamatsu's answer to Nikkatsu's earlier Sun Tribe movies. Shigeomi Satô, the *Eiga Hyôron* (Film Review) editor and long-term champion of cult and avant-garde cinema also put his critical weight behind the films of Wakamatsu Pro, even appearing in front of the camera in several. In fact, within the next five years the way the films of Wakamatsu Pro were perceived within his own country, coupled with a sea change in the type of cinema being produced and consumed across much of the world, had changed so significantly that it was ironically Kazuko Kawakita, Nagamasa and Kashiko's daughter and heir to the Tôwa family cross-cultural promotional enterprise, who proved so instrumental in getting the films *Violated Angels* and *Sex Jack* screened at the Cannes Film Festival in 1971.

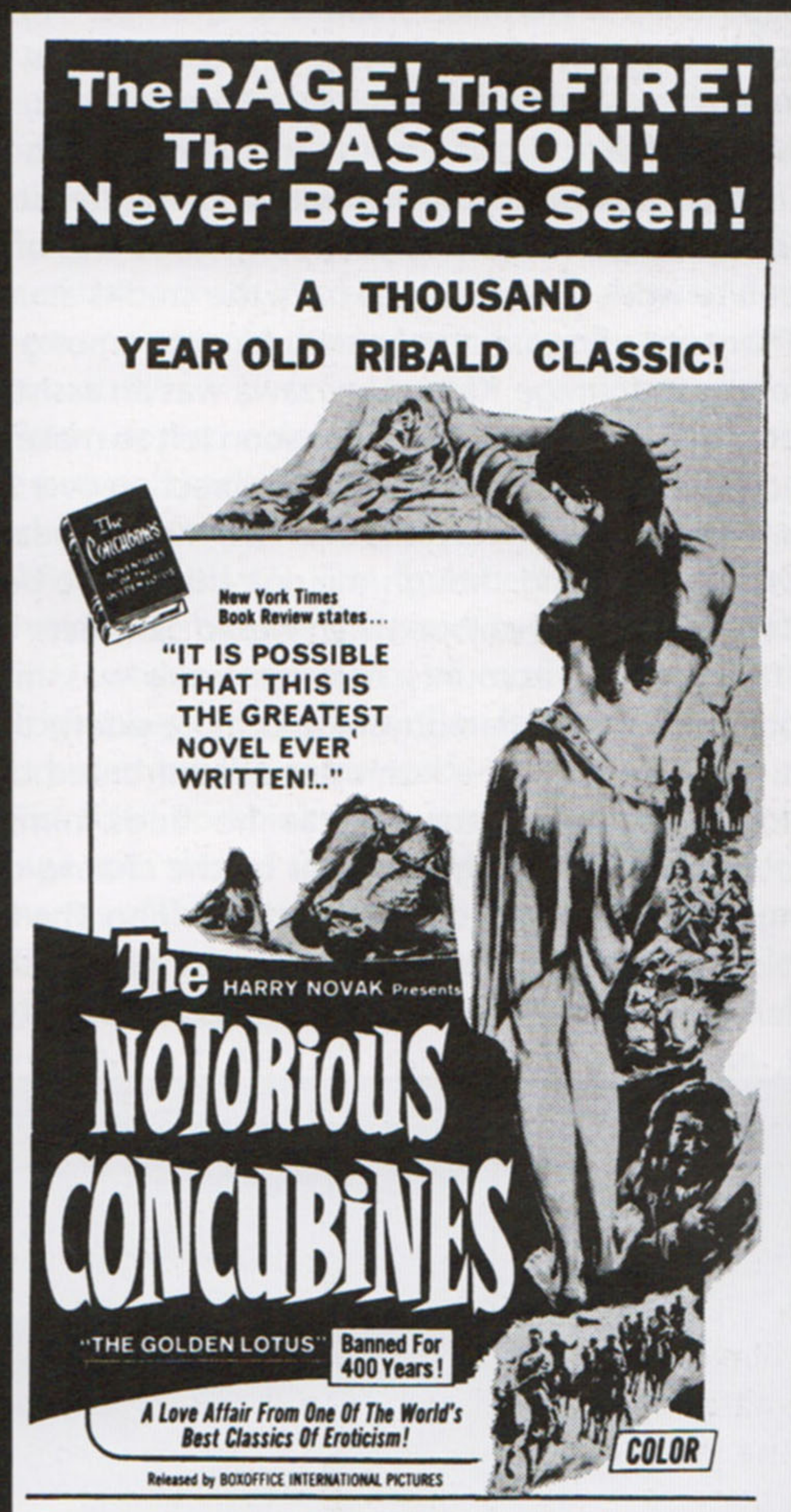
By 1968, Wakamatsu was firmly on the map as a modern Japanese filmmaker, his name considered a popular enough draw on posters for him to be put to work by Shochiku to direct Jûzô Itami (the son of the

eminent pre-war *jidai-geki* filmmaker Mansaku Itami, and later a popular star in his own right and the director of such internationally successful films as *Tampopo* and *A Taxing Woman*) in *The Notorious Concubines*. This sexy but brutal historical epic was adapted from the early 12th Century Chinese literary classic *Kin Ping Mei* (known in its English translation as *The Golden Lotus*). The story details how a lecherous merchant and inveterate social climber is brought to his knees by his scheming seraglio of wives and mistresses. The film was later released in the US and Europe in a dubbed version, although it can hardly be described as being a particularly representative item in its maker's oeuvre, regardless of the language spoken on screen.

The self-effacing Wakamatsu was clearly aware that he came from a radically different world from many of the other figures in the contemporary film and arts scene. The majority of film directors were selected from Japan's most prestigious universities, a prerequisite for entry into the studio system. Still to this day Wakamatsu expresses what he describes as a "university complex" – an intense awareness of his own educational shortcomings. To counter this, he modestly claims that much of his success can be attributed to surrounding himself with people more educated than he is. The various creative agents of screenwriters, performers, directors and other technicians he assembled at Wakamatsu Pro include some of the most colourful and mould-breaking characters to work in Japanese film.

The *Secret Acts Behind Walls* script was written by Takao Yoshizawa and Chûsei Sone under the name of Yoshiaki Ôtani, one of the regular pen names used by the group. Yoshizawa also appeared in the film (as the communist with the keloid scar), and was previously one of the cast members in Ôshima's *Night and Fog in Japan*. Sone was working as an assistant director at Nikkatsu at the time, though he was becoming disillusioned with making films within the rigid studio system in a company that, as the decade progressed, was steadily losing its steam. Along with his colleagues, Atsushi Yamatoya and Yôzô Tanaka, he contributed a number of pseudonymously written scripts for Wakamatsu Pro, before all three returned to Nikkatsu after it had resurrected itself with its Roman Porno line. We'll pick up on their stories in a later chapter, but it is worth mentioning now that while Sone was the only one of these three to later make a name for himself as a director – with the other two remaining better known as screenwriters – Yamatoya was the only one to make films during his time at Wakamatsu Pro, with titles like *Season of Betrayal* and *Dutch Wife of the Wasteland* (as discussed in the previous chapter).

One significant aspect of the company was that the roles of most people involved were in no way set in stone, with everyone encouraged to pitch in together, contributing to scripts, acting, and working in various other capacities. There were however those who stuck



above: Wakamatsu's atypical adaptation of the 12th Chinese literary epic, *The Golden Lotus*, released in America as *The Notorious Concubines*. (courtesy of Something Weird Video Inc. and Box Office International Pictures)

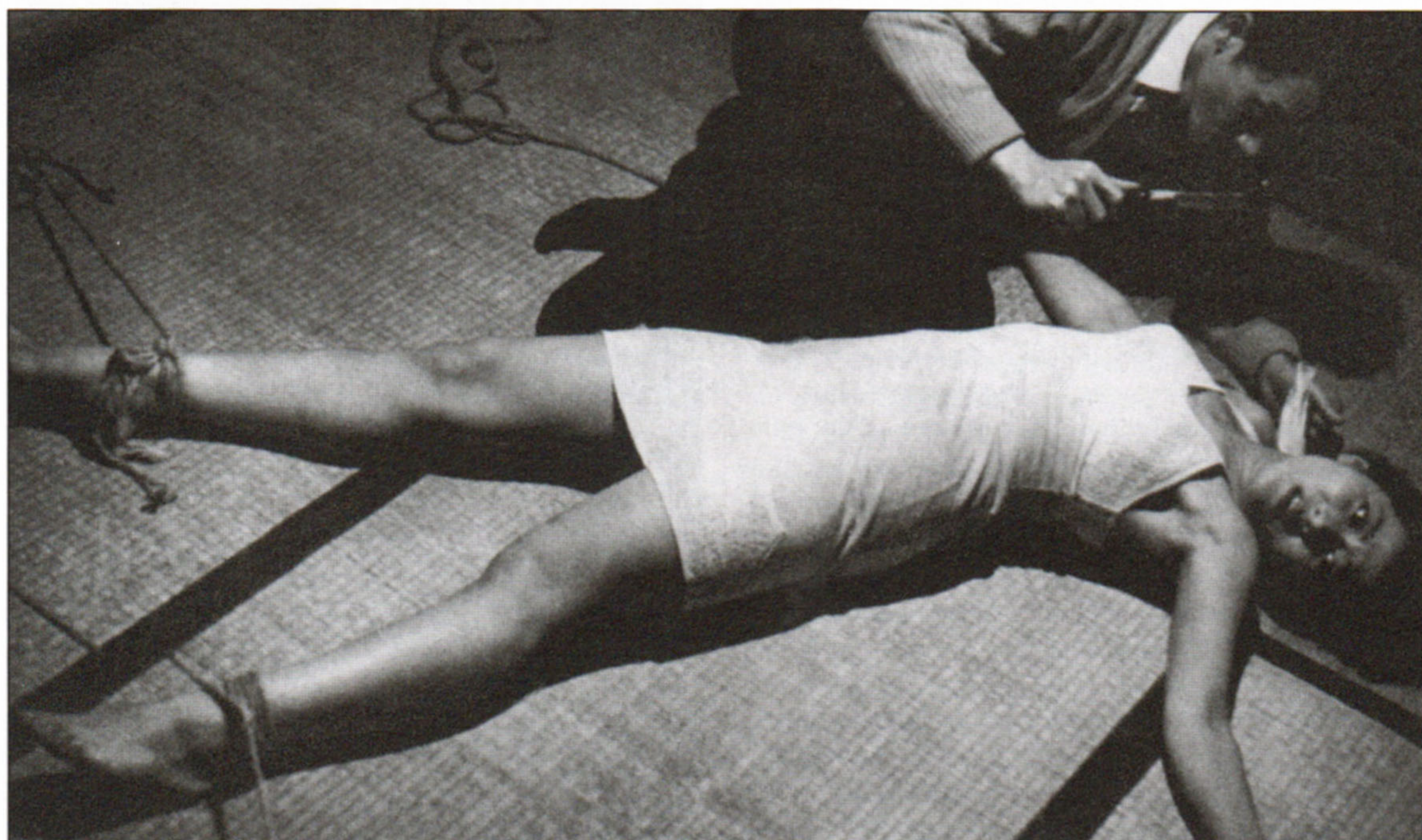
solely to acting: the names Mikio Terajima, Hatsuo Yamaya, Masayoshi Nogami and Ken Yoshizawa appear in the credits from film to film as the male leads. The actresses were less constant: it is something of a running joke that because of Wakamatsu Pro's resolutely independent stance even within the pink industry, budgets were kept incredibly low, and the company often simply couldn't afford the usual glamour girls favoured by other pink producers. Instead, they often scouted female cast members on the streets and in the bars of Shinjuku, and as a result many are perhaps a little homelier than the average. This is probably the reason that many of the actresses, for example the subsidiary nurses in *Violated Angels*, are only credited as appearing in just one film – though it is also worth pointing out that many of Wakamatsu's associates often hid behind pseudonyms, so it is often difficult to work out who's who from the credits alone.

There are a few names of particular note among the rest of the entourage. Kaoru Umezawa was an assistant director in the very early days, but soon left to make his own considerable mark on the genre, directing over 200 titles. Unfortunately, very little of his work is easily available for viewing, though the one title I have been able to see, the full-colour *When Naked Skin Gets Wet* (1971) bears out accounts that his work was more melodramatic, more flamboyant and more poetic than most. Its scenario is of a homosexual confronted by a catalogue of sexual traumas as he finds himself tempted from his younger partner by the charms of a young woman embroiled in a yakuza vice ring. The film is bolstered by some artsy and surprisingly lavishly-rendered dream sequences, in which his temptress sits

facing him as he bangs obsessively on a drum, stripped down to a loincloth and encircled by a sea of naked bodies writhing in ecstasy on the sand as the sea crashes against the shore and the mast of a shipwrecked cruiser pokes above the waves in the background.

Kazuo 'Gaira' Komizu (born 1946), Wakamatsu's assistant director and erstwhile performer in the company's late-'60s work, also went on to direct pink movies, with his first film for Wakamatsu Pro, *Modern-Day Sex Theory: Rape Me* (1970), belatedly followed, some ten years later, by the colourfully-titled *Rabbit Sex: Female Student Group Rape Incident* for Kokuei. He later made something of a name for himself with his 1986 porno-horror diptych of *Entrails of a Virgin* and *Entrails of a Beautiful Woman*. Michio Akiyama, often credited simply as 'Obake' (ghost) in keeping with his pallid spectral presence, was a fairly regular actor sometimes credited as an assistant director, but he made his impact just as profoundly through the characteristic freeform experimental jazz/noise music he penned for the films under the name of Meikyû Sekai ('Maze World'). Masao Matsuda (born 1933), self-styled anarchist and left-wing agitator, and much later an important film critic, appeared in front of the camera on several occasions, but even though he was never actually a member of Wakamatsu Pro, his role behind the scenes informing the political and theoretical content of the films was significant, as we'll see.

One also should not underestimate the influence of cameraman Hideo Itô, who first collaborated with the director on *Red Crime* and shot most (if not all) of the company's films. Even when Wakamatsu Pro went into a



above: Scenes such as this from Wakamatsu's avant-garde classic *The Embryo Hunts in Secret* (1966) were still shocking enough to cause problems with the French censors over 30 years after the film's initial release. ©Wakamatsu Pro

lull during the '70s, for various reasons that will soon become apparent, he continued to lens other films produced by Wakamatsu, including Nagisa Ôshima's *In the Realm of the Senses* and Akitaka Kimata's adaptation of Tanizaki's *The Key* (1983). Along with Kôichi Saitô, whose talents are best evidenced in the films of Takahisa Zeze during the '90s, Itô is one of the most important cinematographers to work within the field of the pink film.

The most crucial component in the story of the evolution of Wakamatsu Pro, however, has to be Masao Adachi. The name of Wakamatsu's closest aide has remained arguably one of the best-kept secrets in Japanese cinema history for decades. From the mid-'70s to the dawn of the new millennium, he was fighting a different battle on the other side of the world, in the Middle East. Before this however, he left behind him what can only be described as some of the most perplexing, idiosyncratic, and politically contentious works of the period, and not just within the field of *pinku eiga*. When he finally returned to his homeland after almost three decades, it was under rather ignominious circumstances.

Adachi's childhood is charted in some detail in the book *Eiga / Kakumei* ('Film / Revolution'), comprised of a series of interviews with the director conducted by Gô Hirasawa and published in 2003. Born in 1939 in Yawata, one of several cities amalgamated in 1963 to form the larger urban hub of Kita-Kyûshû on the most southerly of Japan's four main islands, Adachi had similar working-class roots to Wakamatsu. The region, which later fostered the filmmakers Sôgo Ishii and Shinji Aoyama, as well as a healthy punk scene in the late '70s, had its economic base in heavy industries such as mining, and indeed Adachi's father worked in a steel mill, although he died when Adachi was still young due to lung problems caused by breathing in the polluted factory air. Growing up with nine elder siblings in a one-parent family was tough but, nevertheless, Adachi graduated from high school and in 1959 entered Nihon University in Tokyo, the country's largest institute of higher education.

Here, Adachi soon became an active member of the Nihon University Film Study Club (Nihon daigaku eiga kenkyû-kai), commonly referred to by its abbreviated name, Nichidai Eiken. The group included names like Katsumi Hirano, Motoharu Jônouchi and Isao Okishima. The latter joined Wakamatsu Pro around the same time as Adachi, and though little known outside of experimental filmmaking circles, did make one film for the company in 1969, entitled *New Jack and Betty*.

Alongside more playful projects like *Document LSD* (1961), in which Jônouchi filmed his own experiences under the influence of mind-bending drugs, one of the early activities in which the fledgling filmmakers immersed themselves was documenting the Anpo protests. As Gô Hirasawa, an expert on Japanese

underground cinema from the period writes, however, the films were never made with the intention of being completed, nor even as even being a record of the struggles, but their making, "gave birth to a methodology that presented images as a process of action."¹²⁴ Put simply, it seems that while none of the group were hoping for a career in the commercial industry, finding their satisfaction in the act of filming in itself, even in these early days there was a heavy ideological rhetoric surrounding their creative endeavours, which was carried through into Adachi's first major work, *Rice Bowl* (1961).¹²⁵ Though this cryptic 25-minute, 16mm experimental piece was initiated by Adachi, it is a point of debate whether he really can be said to have directed it. Throughout its production, the traditional hierarchies of filmmaking were idealistically dismantled so that no one single person received a directorial credit and the roles of the individual crew members, from assistants to camera operators to the director himself, were swapped continuously.

Such utopian visions of communal filmmaking may have proven chaotic, but they at least bore fruit, and so Adachi, along with four other Nichidai Eiken students, established the VAN Film Science Research Centre, a filmmaking commune that soon became a hangout for a wider artistic community of musicians, performers, photographers and other artists. For their first project, VAN carried on the same working methodology used for *Rice Bowl*, combining the previously shot Anpo riot footage with staged scenes of Michiko Kanba's death at the hands of the riot police. The resulting film, *Document 6/15*, was premiered in 1962 in a large tent at a *Zengakuren* rally held to commemorate the first anniversary of Kanba's death. Its projection was intended as a one-off 'happening', a multi-media frenzy that featured, among other things, slides of Western paintings projected onto the screen, objects dangling from the roof obstructing the projection, and two intentionally unrelated soundtracks blaring over one another, one of which, due to a technical hitch, could only be heard outside the tent by the gathered throngs who were unable to fit into the tent and see the projected images.¹²⁶ The student participants in the previous year's protests outside the National Diet Building had expected something a little more faithful to the events the film was supposed to be portraying, and were not particularly impressed with the end results, although the film was screened again at a gathering the following year.

Not long after the VAN group's *Document 6/15* project, Adachi and several of these early collaborators, including Isao Okishima, made another experimental work called *Sain*. According to Hirasawa, its production process involved, "LSD experiments, black mass ceremonies and the like", and "symbolized the blocked up times after the 1960 Security Treaty defeat through the image of a woman's congenitally constricted



above: Hatsuo Yamaya plays the emotionally troubled sadist in *The Embryo Hunts in Secret*. ©Wakamatsu Pro

bottom right: Experimental imagery in the disturbing *The Embryo Hunts in Secret*. ©Wakamatsu Pro

vagina." (The Japanese word *Sain* refers to this medical condition). Sources vary as to when the film was actually completed, with most sources giving its release year as 1965, but the JMDB lists the date and venue of its premiere as 3 November, 1963, at the *Zen-Nihon Gakusei Eiga-sai*, or 'All Japan Students Film Festival' – presumably linked in some way to *Zengakuren*. Whether the film can actually be described as 'premiered' as such is a moot point. Like *Document 6/15* it was intended as another counter-cultural 'happening', entitled *Sain no gi* ('The Ceremony of the Blocked Vagina'), this time involving live music, performance and liberal dosages of mind-altering substances, but the day it was supposed to be screened, the film itself went missing, believed stolen. The 'happening' went ahead in true Dadaist fashion without its centrepiece, unfolding in the riotous, unruly fashion no doubt intended before being cut short by a visit from the riot police, who were aware of the members' involvement with the student protestors. After judging the screening to be a 'political gathering', the audience was promptly dispersed.

In 1965, *Sain* was shown at ATG's flagship cinema, the Shinjuku Bunka, which is how Adachi and Wakamatsu came into contact. As Wakamatsu recalled in an interview with Dimitri Ianni, "One day I saw an enormous queue outside the Shinjuku Bunka. Someone told me it was for the projection of the film *Sain*, which has been directed by Masao Adachi when he was a student at Nichidai. He wanted, it seemed, to become my assistant. I was 29 and Adachi was 26, and I went to see this film, which I couldn't understand at all, but I nonetheless found interesting. I thought that this director had qualities which I didn't have, so I asked him to become my assistant on *The Sun Is Redder Than Blood*."¹²⁷

Adachi made his presence felt immediately after starting work at Wakamatsu Pro: "In fact, I have to say he was a really bad assistant. One day we had to shoot a scene in which one of the characters was holding a sword. He forgot to bring the sword, and replaced it with a wooden baton. I was so furious I sent him home and told him never to come back. Several days later he came to see me with a bottle of saké; at that moment I began to appreciate him and entrusted him with the job of a scriptwriter."¹²⁸

Adachi may have made a useless assistant, but as a scriptwriter he proved tremendously inventive, hyper-efficient and, one can only assume, immensely influential. There's a notable difference to Wakamatsu's films made in the second half of the decade, as he drifted from the more realist, plot-driven narratives of *Chronicle of an Affair* and *Secret Acts Behind Walls* into more elusive, experimental, not to mention darkly sadistic territory. Considering that the change is manifest after the period Adachi came onboard, writing his first screenplay for Wakamatsu with *The Embryo Hunts in Secret* in 1966, it is a little ironic that titles such as this, *Violated Angels, A Womb to Let* (1968), and *Go Go Second Time Virgin* are viewed as archetypal Wakamatsu films.

Incidentally, though *The Embryo Hunts in Secret* was written using Wakamatsu Pro's customary penname of Yoshiaki Ôtani, this was soon replaced by a mysterious screenwriting credit that began to appear on the titles of the company's films not long after, spelt with characters that effectively mean 'Out the Exit', and which can be read alternatively as Izuru Deguchi, Deru





Deguchi or De Deguchi. The Deguchi moniker was not the exclusive property of Adachi: Atsushi Yamatoya used it for *Violent Virgin* for example, and it was also used for screenwriting groups headed by Adachi. But it is with Adachi himself that the name is most associated.

The change in style from his earlier films is also partially attributable to the decreasing means Wakamatsu had at its disposal now he'd gone independent. At under ¥2 million, *The Embryo Hunts in Secret* represents one of Wakamatsu Pro's tiniest budgets, with only the Yamatoya-scripted *Violent Virgin*, released a few years later, being produced for less. Its dark mood and indeed its very concept were born out of the shoestring funds at disposal for its production. After deciding to shoot in his own office, one night, while in a particularly morose frame of mind, Wakamatsu was struck by the impression of the rain outside, streaming down the window panes. He discussed his ideas for the film with his new screenwriter, and Adachi immediately went away and wrote a scenario for what was essentially his first non-student production, boasting a lavish finale in which the walls of the building exploded dramatically. Wakamatsu was impressed, though evidently less excited about the prospect of blowing up his own production office, so sent Adachi away to come up with something a little more manageable, which he duly delivered in an extraordinarily quick time. Less than a week later, the film was in the can.

Opening with religious choral music and a quote from the book of Job before laying out the credits over a series of stills of fetuses, the drama begins with a man bringing back a young lady to his apartment. We can assume they're strangers, as he only gets round to asking her name after she has disrobed for him. Then,



what begins as a straightforward seduction soon develops sinister overtones, as he binds her to the single bed which provides the room's only furnishing, and keeps her imprisoned for several days, periodically exerting his pent-up misogynist urges on her using rope and whip. What Noël Burch describes as the "torture scenes which are the film's only narrative structure"¹²⁹ are interleaved with flashback,s initially insinuating that the man is reliving some traumatic primal scene, but later revealing that his rage has been transposed from a prior conflict between him and his wife over their unborn child.





The Embryo Hunts in Secret is one of Wakamatsu's most vicious and reductive films, and still today makes for difficult viewing (in fact, it was awarded the equivalent of an X-rating by the French censors when the company Zootrope attempted to reissue the film in 2007, drastically limiting its distribution possibilities). Its uncompromising, unconventional style has ensured that it has retained its interest as a key work in its director's oeuvre, and points to the new directions in which Wakamatsu's filmmaking would evolve: for example, the sparse and static single-room location that is enlivened by a highly dramatic use of framing, editing and spotlighting; the shimmering light patterns on the walls that contribute to the unsettling mood; the innovative camera angles, close-ups, freeze-frames and superimpositions that combine with a jarring contrapuntal use of sound; and the seemingly unrelated, non-diegetic footage cut into the main narrative to suggest a rupture between internal and external worlds.

Despite its low budget, *The Embryo Hunts in Secret* ultimately proved to be a highly profitable venture, but its approach was all so far removed from usual *eroduction* fare that Wakamatsu was initially unable to sell it to distributors; it was only by virtue of the fact that he was able to deal directly with a number of local

exhibitors that it screened in Japan at all. Ironically, while this avant-garde veneer hampered the film's chances at home, it also led to it being invited by organiser Jacques Ledoux to the 1968 Knokke-Le-Zoute Experimental Film Festival in Belgium and thus became the second of the director's works to be screened at a foreign festival.

This was not the first time that cutting-edge underground filmmaking from Japan had been represented at the Belgian festival. In 1964, a delegation consisting of Yôichi Takabayashi, Takahiko Imura, Nobuhiko Ôbayashi and Donald Richie (this time in his guise as a filmmaker) received a rapturous reception and a group award. No such luck this time, as Wakamatsu was joined by several of his fellow citizens, including a young and provocative Yôko Ono, exhibiting *Bottoms*, her 1966 short film comprised only of a parade of posteriors. As he later recalled, *The Embryo Hunts in Secret*, "was actually shown in a programme with several Japanese experimental films. The programme started with a film showing only a flickering light followed by a film by Yoko Ono in which she just ran around and spread her legs. The audience must have thought Japanese films were horrible!" Screening as it did alongside works more comfortably belonging to the experimental scene, such as Michael Snow's *Wavelength* (1967), Wakamatsu's film itself did not go down well at all in Belgium, and during the ensuing hubbub the director judiciously hid in the background as Shigeomi Satô, the Japanese critic and friend who'd accompanied him on his trip, was mobbed by the local press. "They must have thought that an ordinary guy like me couldn't possibly be the director of such a strange film..."¹³⁰

Interestingly enough, this all occurred during Ono's pre-Beatles era, during which time she was involved in the Fluxus movement as a young artist, and as an actress she was appearing in movies like the ludicrously-titled *Satan's Bed* (1965), an American grindhouse roughie not dissimilar in either content or production values to the



above and top left: The innovative interplay of light and sound open up a nightmare world onscreen in *The Embryo Hunts in Secret* (1966).

©Wakamatsu Pro



above: The aftermath of the climactic bloodbath in the hypnotic *Violated Angels* (1967), one of the two Wakamatsu films screened to Western audiences at Cannes in 1971. ©Wakamatsu Pro

eroductions of the same era: in it she played a Japanese mail-order bride who runs up against a trio of *Last House on the Left*-style rapists/kidnappers, including a butch bisexual woman. Given that Ono's later film experiments with Lennon include *Rape* (1969), a *vérité* account of a young woman pursued through the streets by a cameraman to symbolise the intrusiveness of the contemporary media, and *Fly* (1970), charting half an hour in extreme close-up of the eponymous insect's wanderings over the contours of a recumbent female nude, one might conjecture what a good member of Wakamatsu Pro she herself might have made. The two compatriots did in fact get on like a house on fire during their sojourn in Belgium, with Wakamatsu cooking a curry for the impoverished artist, and Ono returning the kindness by introducing him to the joys of pot smoking. The next time they met, her circumstances had changed dramatically.

Undoubtedly the first thing many encountering movies like *The Embryo Hunts in Secret* will ask themselves is, "What does it all mean?" Aside from the relentless violence against its female character, it was undoubtedly this apparent lack of clarity of purpose that angered the Belgian audiences. Wakamatsu himself warns against too

deep an intellectual reading of his works, attributing their resonance to their direct addresses to viewers' primal urges, in which the basic ingredients of sex and violence stand as shorthand expressions of a liberating potential. "In my case, if you talk about violence, there is that which is related to invasion and that which is related to release. If you look at rape, this is obviously an act of invasion. If you look at my films, the nature of my own character, what I have inside of me becomes visible onscreen in these ways. If a woman gets raped, and a lot do in my films, the rapist often gets killed in the end. The rape is the invasion part, and the killing is the release part."¹³¹

Violated Angels (1967), one of Wakamatsu's most infamous titles, follows this rhythmic flow. Manifesting itself like dark murmurs from a suppressed id leaving their imprint on celluloid, its setup was actually inspired by a real-life incident; the notorious massacre of eight student nurses by Richard Speck, which had taken place the previous year in Chicago.¹³² The original title translates as *Violated White Robes* and refers to the nurses' gowns. Within the film's condensed 57-minute running time, a dormitory full of nurses are bound, assaulted and slain before the assailant relapses into a pre-Oedipal haze, using the solitary survivor's bare



bosom for a pillow as the two sit surrounded by the naked corpses of the girls he has just slain. The film was shot hurriedly over the course of three days, the same length of time as the actual seige, and though the JMDB lists the input of Masao Adachi, Osamu Yamashita and the film's lead actor, the experimental playwright Jûrô Kara, at the scriptwriting stage (on the print itself, only Wakamatsu is given a writing credit), a large part of this virtually wordless project must have been improvised.

Much of this claustrophobic psychosexual trauma's potency, like that of *The Embryo Hunts in Secret*, derives from its layering of simple cinematic techniques (leading to Noël Burch's assessment of Wakamatsu during this period as, "a primitive: he had learned the rudiments of 'film grammar' and still relied on them completely");¹³³ the post-dubbed sounds of pistol shots, women sobbing, the wind howling outside; freeze-frames, jump cuts and whiteouts; a hallucinatory sequence of the bare-chested nurses individually advancing threateningly against a black background; and the climactic dramatic flourish as the film suddenly switches from monochrome during the final moments of carnage, flooding the screen with crimson. According to Wakamatsu, while the use of colour to accentuate the 'pink' scenes was by now a well-established *eroduction* practice, this was the first time it had even been used for any other dramatic effect, and soon became a recognisable component of the director's stylistic arsenal.¹³⁴ Taken as a whole, the film is immensely powerful, and though picked up for European distribution following Cannes 1971, it was refused release in several countries; in the UK, for example, it was denied a certificate by the BBFC, though it was at least allowed to be screened in several independent cinemas during the '70s and '80s, such as the Electric Cinema in Notting Hill Gate and the Scala in Kings Cross.

While rape and other acts of sexual violence in Wakamatsu's films are seldom portrayed in realistic terms, the real world does intrude into their narratives in other ways. While the rapist-murderer at the heart of *Violated Angels* is ultimately seen as being like a child pulling apart dolls, unable to see any reality behind his actions, his violence is contextualised in the film's final moments as a product of the troubled times in which he lives. The stills sequence of the police breaking into the nurse's ward is mingled into a montage of similar shots of the *kidôtai* riot police battling student demonstrators on the streets, scenes of US fighter planes, and flashes of newspaper headlines referring to events in Vietnam – all accompanied by the virtually inaudible drone of a radio newflash playing beneath.

Japan Assault Dark History: Blood of an Abnormal Man (1967), written by Adachi, had an even more overt political dimension to it. Adopting an omnibus format to spread its assaults, all committed by members of the same family, across the Meiji, Taishô and Shôwa eras, it presents a thinly-veiled allegory of the tainted blood of



above and opposite: *Japan Assault Dark History: Blood of an Abnormal Man* (1967), a diatribe against the Imperial House spanning three separate eras.
©Wakamatsu Pro

the imperial family line and an acknowledgement of the Shôwa Emperor Hirohito's part in the acts of overseas aggression in mainland Asia that led to the Pacific War. By contrast, in a later work, *Thirteen Serial Assaults* (1978), the titular violence is conducted relentlessly and apparently without motive by its unsympathetic protagonist, a crude young thug clad in workman's dungarees. This film express a violent impotent rage at the suffocating stasis of bourgeois Japanese society after the leftist dreams of the '60s had shattered.

In *Go Go Second Time Virgin* (1969), as the title suggests, the seventeen-year-old victim played by Mimi Kozakura is gang raped not once but twice; the first time in a poetic blue-tinted flashback on a beach, with the waves crashing rhythmically behind, the second on a rooftop in the heart of the city, after which she passes the entire night lying stunned and immobile on her back, staring blankly at the sky. The sun rises the following morning, revealing her assailants have disappeared, leaving behind a serious-looking young man (played by Akiyama) who had remained, standing coldly detached, at the sidelines during the attack. She beseeches him to kill her, but their attempts to engage in further conversation are disrupted by the reappearance

of the gang of solvent-sniffing delinquents. After the group have dispersed again, the two young people spend the following day in a soul-searching dialogue, discussing possible ways to put an end to their pain, pledging to plunge together from the top of the building down to the streets below.

Scripted by Adachi and Gaira, and once more making innovative use of the limited number of locations available for shooting, the world depicted in *Go Go Second Time Virgin* is a purely allegorical one. The rooftop setting, actually the terrace of the building containing Wakamatsu Pro's office, serves as a surreal societal microcosm; its characters are ciphers, two young innocents trapped in a cruel, oppressive and chaotic world, finding an emotional haven in each other's company. In the morning a housewife hangs out white sheets, all but oblivious to the shell-shocked young girl lying naked after her violation. This restricted yet open-aired environment, with its vantage over the rest of the city, is subjected to periodic sudden downpours from above, and relentless invasions by the violent hoodlums and their hangers-on from below. As Akiyama's character leads the victim downstairs, into the dark maze of rooms and corridors within the tenement block, the rain seeps in from above. They eventually reach his hidey-hole crammed full of returned copies of the book he has written, his poetic instincts rejected by an indifferent



this page: *Go Go Second Time Virgin* (1969): Mimi Kozakura and 'Obake' (Michio Akiyama) on the rooftop above Wakamatsu Pro's office in Shinjuku.

©Wakamatsu Pro

world. Wandering together around the floors of the deserted building, he unveils a darker secret; a sealed apartment full of the corpses of the group he murdered after they sexually abused him. It is not the last time he is forced to turn to violence.

The film's trippy acid rock soundtrack was written by male lead Akiyama, including the song he croons at various junctures, which sets up a web of bewildering poetic allusions (for example references to Norman Mailer, the American writer jailed in 1967 for his involvement in the anti-Vietnam movement) before the film climaxes in violent images taken from the *gekiga* manga *Lone Wolf and Cub* (*Kozure Ōkami*) and publicity stills of the film director Roman Polanski with his wife Sharon Tate, hastily cut into the film shortly after the model, actress and *Valley of the Dolls* star, then pregnant with Polanski's child, was slaughtered by members of the crazed Manson Family on 8 August, 1969. None of the details behind the Tate-LaBianca murders were known anywhere at the time of the film's release, and the meaning implied by such references is not entirely clear, but has been taken by some as a comment on "the auto-destruction of the 'love generation' which marked 1969."¹³⁵ It would be interesting to know whether Polanski is in any way aware of this rather tasteless editorial comment on his private tragedy. Clearly, *Go Go Second Time Virgin* was not originally made with an

international audience in mind. Wakamatsu claimed he had met the Polish director when *Secret Acts Behind Walls* was shown alongside *Repulsion* in Berlin in 1965, and even that critics had favourably compared his film with Polanski's. The truth is, Polanski didn't actually attend the festival that year, and the story indicates what an unreliable narrator of his own life history Wakamatsu sometimes can be.¹³⁶

There's an air of a mad party about the later film, *Violent Virgin*, a wild, improvisational piece boasting many of Wakamatsu Pro's most familiar faces gathered in the bleak wastelands near the city of Gotemba, at the foot of Mount Fuji. Its ad hoc production circumstances and its minuscule budget go some way to explaining its rawness and spontaneity. The film was conceived by Wakamatsu while he was producing Adachi's *High School Girl Guerrilla*, hence the shared casts and crews between the two films. Impressed by the outdoor locations, Wakamatsu hurriedly asked Atsushi Yamatoya to come up with a scenario, and within three days there was a completed script. Its title came later, and was one of the genre's most legendary. *Shojo geba geba* was apparently christened one drunken evening by none other than Nagisa Ōshima while he was socialising with Wakamatsu; *shojo* means 'virgin', while *geba geba* comes from the German word for violence, 'Gewalt', used in Japan to refer to the violent retaliatory tactics used by student political radicals.



above: Toshiyuki Tanigawa and Eri Ashikawa fall victim to the mob in the Yamatoya-scripted *Violent Virgin* (1969).
©Wakamatsu Pro

Group photo with Eri Ashikawa as centrepiece taken from the finale of *Violent Virgin* (1969), with several of the cast also working as crew members. ©Wakamatsu Pro



Like Yamatoya's own *Dutch Wife of the Wasteland*, *Violent Virgin* constructs a nightmarish metaphorical otherworld quite distinct from the real, utilising only the basic features of the landscape, in this case embellished with the simplest of decorative elements: a tent, a sandpit, and a giant wooden cross. This latter forms the centrepiece of a hedonistic orgy of sex, drink and violence, mounted as a bizarre ceremony by a gang of yakuza and their female hangers-on. The happy occasion is the lynching of the boss's unfaithful mistress Hanako (Ashikawa) and her lover Hoshi (Tanigawa), a *chinpira* (gang runner) from the mob's lower ranks. The two are initially bound together, naked and blindfolded, and thrown into the sandpit, before the two-timing moll is hoisted up on the giant crucifix as a scapegoat, and her lover is subjected to various humiliations below. After Hoshi is thrown into a tent and forced to make love to one of the other hussies, he strangles her and manages to flee from the circle of violence but, like a nightmare, he always winds up running back to the same spot.

Verbal descriptions fail to do justice to the immediacy of Wakamatsu's films' discomfiting yet

hypnotic imagery and their undeniably emotive charge. Raw and instinctive, they proved immensely popular with young people, and perfectly captured the vibrancy and sense of confusion of the times. The atmosphere of Shinjuku towards the end of the '60s has been described as simultaneously that of a carnival, a giant party and a war zone, with the Art Theatre Guild's Shinjuku Bunka as its cultural hub. Following its establishment in 1962, Shinjuku Bunka had heated up to become so much more than just a venue for cutting edge cinema and theatre. It was a meeting place, a hangout and a lively drinking establishment frequented by many of the leading lights of underground (*angura*) theatre, music and dance. As previously mentioned, it was the Shinjuku Bunka that played host to Wakamatsu and Adachi's first meeting. It should be added too that it was because of *Sain's* run at the Shinjuku Bunka looking so unsatisfactory on the venue's large screen as it was projected from 16mm, that ATG producer Kinshirô Kuzui decided to open a smaller theatre in the building's basement, given over to underground movies and live fringe performances.

The basement screen was opened in 1967, formally inaugurated with a screening of a new experimental work from Adachi. Filmed in part colour and running for 75 minutes, *Galaxy* was Adachi's longest work to date and is considered a landmark in Japanese experimental cinema; born out of another collaboration with his Nichidai Eiken/VAN associates, this image-driven, elliptical piece portrayed a nameless man's search for identity, couched in the language of surrealism and cosmology.

This new venue was called the Sasori-za, or Theatre Scorpio, after Kenneth Anger's underground classic *Scorpio Rising* (1964), though the idea for the name came from none other than the novelist Yukio Mishima. What Adachi must have made of this connection with the patriotic and fanatical writer, whose outdated espousal of the *bushidô* code made him particularly repellent to leftists, is amusing to conjecture; in a scene in Adachi's *Sex Play* made two years later, the characters make a big show of tearing up a publicity photo of the author in full military regalia!

Theatre Scorpio proved the perfect arena to showcase Wakamatsu Pro's films, playing to an audience markedly different from the average patron of the venues screening his more standard *eroduction* work; politically active, culturally tuned-in, and of both sexes. They also screened on college campuses, like that of Waseda University, and soon were adapting their form to fit more closely into these new audiences' tastes and experiences. Few works better reflect this shift in gear than *Shinjuku Mad* (1970). Though this particular title opens sensationally with a double slaying and a sexual assault as – in the film's only colour sequence – two members of an underground theatre group are slain mid-performance by a group of anonymous thugs, the film rapidly moves on from the norms of the pink film to become something far more intriguing as its running time progresses. As the girl is stripped bare and smeared with the crimson blood of the lead actor, the viewer is initially left questioning whether this might be part of the play itself being staged for the film, until the following scene switches back to the monochrome exterior of a police station. The police however are unwilling to get involved in any investigation, and so it is left to the murdered actor's father to solve the mystery. His only clue at the beginning is the cryptic words 'Shinjuku Mad' – but is this a person, a place, or perhaps even a state of mind? His search leads him into an alien underworld amongst the streets of the celebrated Tokyo district, in which every one of his values finds itself breached as he encounters permissive sex parties, John Lennon wannabes strumming guitars and wailing Hare Krishna, and ultimately a self-styled anarchist gang of *bôsôzoku* bikers preaching violent revolution for the sake of revolution.

Scripted by Adachi, and one of Wakamatsu's personal favourites of his own films, *Shinjuku Mad* is an evocative and vicarious portrait of Swinging Shinjuku in

its vibrant heyday, making full use of local landmarks like the bustling train station – one of the city's biggest – and the warren of subways beneath it; the Hanazono Jinja shrine, a source of spiritual inspiration for the district's creative community; and the Golden Gai area behind it, a mazelike rat-run of tiny unassuming bars which still, to this day, provide a welcome home-from-home for the local bohemian network comprised of writers, journalists, filmmakers and artists.

Clues abound throughout the film as to the area's status as a celebrated wellspring for a volatile alternative arts scene. This was where, during the late '60s and early '70s, experimental playwrights such as Shûji Terayama and his Tenjô Sajiki (Balcony Seat) theatrical troupe, and Jûrô Kara and his Jôkyô Gekijô (Circumstance Theatre) provoked scandal with their mould-breaking and spontaneous public performances, adapting and subverting theatrical traditions to fit the turbulence of the time. One can get some idea of the exuberant *zeitgeist* by watching Terayama's experimental short films, like *Emperor Tomato Ketchup* (1970), and the ATG-produced feature he directed, *Throw Away Your Books and Go Out Into the Streets* (1971), which, similar to Wakamatsu's film, depicts a Shinjuku populated by transvestites, young rebels torching American flags, and various other disenfranchised members of the urban population. The police were often called in to break up these performances, especially those of Kara, who soon adopted the expedient solution of staging his works in makeshift crimson tents, earning his plays the nickname of *Aka-Tento* theatre. The atmosphere recalls that of the British rave scene of the late '80s. As soon as the riot police were brought in to restore public order, whispered voices would inform audiences of the tent's next location. In this regard, the ambiguous presentation of the murder that sets *Shinjuku Mad's* narrative in motion fits well in line with the kind of outrageous events that both Terayama and Kara were putting on in public. In one of the outdoor location scenes, Kara's Red Tent can clearly be seen in the background and, as mentioned, the relationship runs deeper than a mere reference: Kara had also starred as the disturbed rapist with the Oedipal complex in *Violated Angels*.

But *Shinjuku Mad* does point to a darker side of local youth culture. The police decision not to investigate at the beginning of the film is telling. This is a lawless world where social convention is turned on its head. It is not only a world of free love, but also of explosive violence, and the boundaries and ties between the various factions of yakuza, student radicals, and *bôsôzoku* biker gangs are almost impossible to discern from the outside. Ending with the streets overrun with bikers, the film paints a portrait of renegade forces allowed to flourish unchecked by society, an image not far removed from the war really unfolding on the streets at that time. And the violence was just about to abruptly change for the worse.

Footnotes

110 Richie, Donald. *The Japan Journals: 1947-2004*. Berkeley: Stone Bridge, 2004. pg 259.

111 Domenig, Roland (ed.) "ATG Against the Grain: Changes in Japanese Cinema of the 1960s and early 1970s. Symposium. *Minikomi* 70. pg 82.

112 Ibid.

113 Interview with Daisuke Asakura. *24th Pia Film Festival Catalogue*. pg 83.

114 Wakamatsu has recounted his life story on numerous occasions. Along with my own conversations with the director, the sources used here are Christian Storms's video interview on the Image Entertainment release of *Go Go Second Time Virgin* and Dimitri Ianni's exhaustive discussion with the director on the Sancho Does Asia website (www.sancho-asia.com/article.php3?id_article=1437) (French), which very closely follows the account Wakamatsu himself gives in his book *Jikô nashi* (trans. *Unbound to Convention*), a series of interviews published in 2005.

115 Ianni, Dimitri. Ibid.

116 Kamiyama would later stick behind the scenes as a voice actor for animations including the 1965 Toei Dôga TV series *Ken the Wolf Boy*, and animated features like *Animal Treasure Island* (1971) and Hayao Miyazaki's *Castle in the Sky* (1986).

117 In an interview with Gô Hirasawa, (*Minikomi* 70. pg 61), Wakamatsu states that this film was not produced by Wakamatsu Pro, and it was its success that led to him founding his own company. However, all other sources state that the film was produced by Wakamatsu Pro, including the film's own credits.

118 *Minikomi* 70. pg 61.

119 'Anata wa Hiroshima no shôchô, Nihon no shôchô, sensô hantai no shôchô.'

120 *Cahiers du cinéma* #171 Oct. 1965. pg 12.

121 After World War II, overseas travel only became a possibility for ordinary Japanese in 1964.

122 *Minikomi* 70. pg 60-68.

123 Ibid. pg 64.

124 Hirasawa, Gô. "The Rise of Underground Cinema and the Early Years of ATG". Art Theatre Guild. pg 26.

125 Prior to this he had made the ten-minute 8mm work *And Another Day Goes By As Usual...* (*Konnichi mo mata sugita*, 1960).

126 Hirasawa sees it as a technical hitch, though Johannes Schönherr, in his article "Masao Adachi: Portrait of a Radical in Cinema and Politics" (*Film International* 14, 2005. pg 2) claims Adachi decided to play only one of the soundtracks as a way of stirring up trouble between *Zengakuren* and the JCP.

127 Ianni, Dimitri.

128 Ibid.

129 Burch. *To the Distant Observer*. pg 351.

130 *Minikomi* 70, pg 63.

131 "Sex and Politics in Japanese Film" podium discussion moderated by Roland Domenig between Kôji Wakamatsu, Hisayasu Satô, Yûji Tajiri and Mark Nornes at Frankfurt's Nippon Connection festival, 23 April, 2006.

132 Burch (pg 352) states the film was shot "within a week of that horrendous event", giving the year for *Violated Angels* as 1969. However, the Speck murders actually occurred 14-17 July, 1966, while the Japanese Movie Database gives the film's release date of March 1967.

133 Burch. pg 351-352.

134 Ianni, Dimitri. Ibid.

135 Hunter, Jack, *Eros in Hell*. pg 46.

136 I am indebted to Roland Domenig for this interesting piece of information.



above: *Ecstasy of the Angels* (1972).
©Wakamatsu Pro

Eiga / Kakumei: The Story of Masao Adachi

While much of Wakamatsu's crossover success might be attributable to his close friend and ally Masao Adachi, it should be remembered that Adachi himself also directed a number of works for Wakamatsu Pro, beginning not long after he joined the company with *Abortion* (1966) and *Birth Control Revolution* (1967). Neither are readily available for viewing, though it is interesting how their titles alone, like those of *Sain* and *The Embryo Hunts in Secret*, again present sex in a clinical, functional light, more than as something pleasurable, while presenting ideas of broken lineages, terminated futures or mass liberation.

According to Roland Domenig, the films parodied the *basukon eiga* that, as we saw in an earlier chapter, several enterprising exhibitors had marketed as 'sex films' in the '50s in an attempt to lure sensation-seekers. *Abortion* is "about a crazy gynaecologist who wants to liberate mankind from sexual problems by radically separating sex on the one hand and reproduction, which should be left to artificial wombs, on the other." For the opening scene, Adachi used a birth scene from an older 16mm sex education film, either a pre-war *osan eiga* or a post-war *basukon eiga*. It was Adachi's first *pinku eiga*, and his next film, *Birth Control Revolution* (1967) again features the crazy gynaecologist, whose name, by the way, is Marukido Sadao, a pun on Marquis de Sade. Adachi used the name again in his script for Kôji Wakamatsu's infamous *The Embryo Hunts in Secret* (1967) in which the protagonist is driven by his wish to return into the maternal uterus – an inventive variation on the 'birth film' theme. Adachi was not alone in mocking the birth control discourse. Shinya Yamamoto ridiculed the issue in *Pregnancy Childbirth Abortion* (1968) and *Sex Counselling: The Perfect Contraception* (1969), and so did Kinya Ogawa in *Menses and Pregnancy* (1968) and *Birth and Contraception* (1969), or Kôji Seki in *Conduct: Pregnancy/Abortion* (1973). And we must not forget Takae Shindô's *Abortion Surgery* (1969), which was produced by the originally named production company Young Men Art Film Association (*Seinen Bijutsu Eikyo*)."¹³⁷

This view of the sexual act as something that can't be separated from its reproductive function, while also clearly functioning as an allegory for other social or political issues is one that permeates one of Adachi's strongest films, and his last offering in the pink genre, *Gushing Prayer: A 15-Year-Old Prostitute* (1971). The film begins with an extended group sex scene in which the story's young protagonist, Yasuko, is very much the centrepiece. As she lies beneath the thrusts of an enthusiastic adolescent classmate, her friends call on

her anxiously from the sidelines: "Can you feel it? What does it feel like?" Yasuko however, confesses to feeling nothing, in fact appearing frozen to all feeling. And so, on the threshold of womanhood, with all the weight of adult expectation and responsibility that entails, upon the goading encouragement of her peers she sets out on an odyssey of self-exploration in search of complete sexual satiation. Her first meeting is with her schoolteacher, who is disturbingly revealed as being the object of her first crush. The group then move on to watch a couple in action at a love hotel, and it is decided that if Yasuko wants to know what it feels like to be a prostitute, with sex reduced to a mere economic transaction, then she must search for random clients and receive money from them. As the group of high school students play truant around a Shinjuku humming with performances from experimental theatre groups and, contrastingly, real-life scenes of jeeps and tanks crawling through the streets – reminding us just how strong the anti-terrorist police presence actually was in Tokyo at the turn of the decade – the ensuing series of encounters, first with a random young teenager accosted in the streets, and later in a *ramen* noodle store, filmed from outside as she straddles the chef, lead inevitably to unwanted pregnancy.

While adhering to an episodic narrative comprised of each of Yasuko's individual sexual encounters, *15-Year-Old Prostitute* is anything but a standard pink film. The doleful strains of a numbingly simple acoustic guitar melody picked out on the soundtrack contribute a distinctively eerie and unsettling air to proceedings, but it is a more experimental device that portends the outcome of Yasuko's attempts at sexual mastery: each encounter is overlaid by the ghostly blank voices of teenage girl suicides reading out their own farewell notes, anonymously-signed to give only



above: Masao Adachi's eroduction debut *Abortion* (1966) was a parody of the birth control film, or *osan eiga*, the first cinematic works in Japan to depict sexual matters with any degree of candour. ©Wakamatsu Pro



above: Aki Sasaki goaded on by her peers in Adachi's 1971 film *Gushing Prayer: A 15-Year-Old Prostitute*. ©Wakamatsu Pro

the details of their age and sex (i.e. "a 17-year-old girl"). After Yasuko herself arrives early at the love hotel at which she has arranged a rendezvous with the man who stole her virginity, the film dramatically bursts into colour with her attempts at killing herself by inhaling gas from the room's heater. The scene is lengthy and harrowing as, in a daze, she scribbles her

farewell note in soap on the bathroom mirror, before violently throwing up blood in the toilet.

Impressive as *15-Year-Old Prostitute* is, and despite the early acclaim of his experimental exercises, it should be said that generally in his pink filmmaking work, Adachi comes across more as a man of ideas than implementation. When you lay his films alongside Wakamatsu's more instinctive and tightly-realised accomplishments, they often seem rather ad hoc and rough around the edges, though this in itself is one of the keys to their appeal, with their anarchic, freeform style managing perfectly to capture a certain mood and energy endemic to the period.

Few films demonstrate this better than the exuberant celebration of youth, sex and revolution that is *High School Girl Guerrilla* (1969), which for all its shifts in geography, gender and social class, still manages to inspire a similar fist-raising zeal to the famous final sequence in Lindsay Anderson's *If...* (made just the year before), in which Malcolm McDowell and his chums, on the rooftop of their public school, fire rifles at the teachers and fellow students mingling in the quadrangle below. Both films were symptomatic of the way in which old-school values were being attacked across the world, though if there were any further similarities, these are best



above: Playing at revolution in *High School Girl Guerrilla* (1969). ©Wakamatsu Pro

attributed to coincidence, as Anderson's film, distributed by Paramount under the title *If Moshimo...*, opened in Japan on 2 August, 1969, several months after *High School Girl Guerrilla*'s release on 26 May.

Opening with scenes of soldiers and tanks manoeuvring across the plains beneath Mount Fuji as part of a Self Defence Force exercise, *High School Girl Guerrilla* depicts three failing rural high school girls who sabotage their own graduation by breaking into the school and stealing their exam results. Burning their school report cards beneath Mount Fuji, they head up into the mountain with a newly befriended group of boys of a similar age, and hole up in a picturesque mountain lake fed by a waterfall – though not before using their feminine wiles to divest several *jieitai* soldiers of their weapons and uniforms, and undertake a comedic attempt at leading a goose and a cow stolen from a nearby farm up the mountain path along with them, to provide food. The use of Mount Fuji as a location is significant: an emblem of Japan imbued by the Shinto religion with a unique spiritual significance, it was in fact barred from the nation's screens under the US occupation lest it instil too much of a patriotic swell in the hearts of its viewers. In their mountain hideout, the youngsters plot revolution for the sake of revolution while engaging in such youthful activities as skinny dipping and coming to terms with each other's gender differences, though a worm soon emerges in their paradise as they come under attack from a crazed man in military uniform. He is not, however, a member of Japan's Self Defence Force as his attire suggests, but a solitary survivalist with his own fanatical right-wing agenda. And worst of all, as time marches on, the students' act of rebellion soon finds itself under threat from its ultimate countermeasure – indifference – as the would-be revolutionaries find themselves totally ignored by the school authorities and left on a cold mountain slope to bicker among themselves.



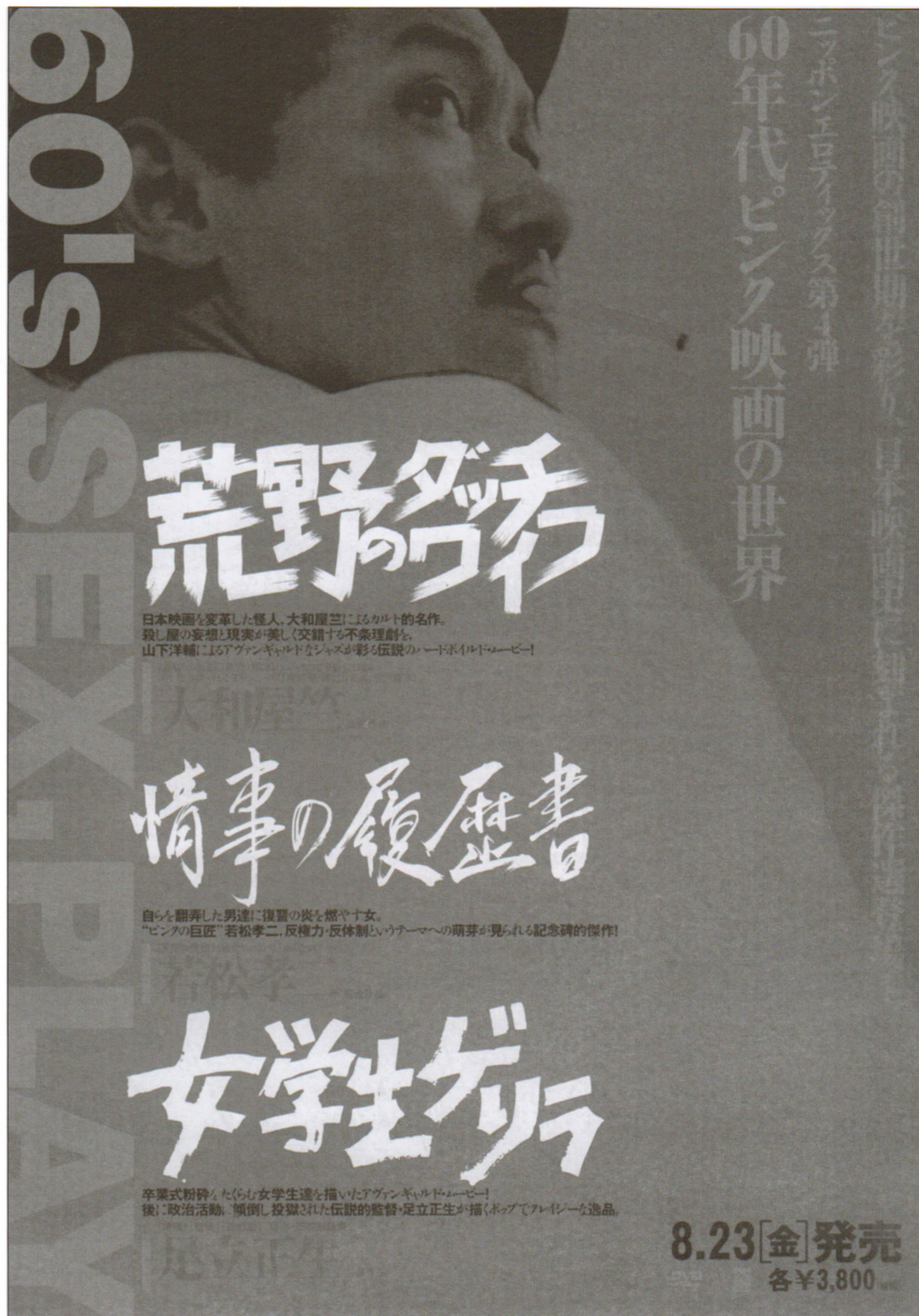
above: Holed up in the foothills of Mount Fuji in *High School Girl Guerrilla*
©Wakamatsu Pro

Given the subsequent course his life took, it is very tempting to view Adachi as the ultimate 'guerrilla filmmaker', a man who saw no distinction between representing his beliefs on film and putting his fantasies into practice. His films at this point however, simply don't bear this out. If Adachi did have a direct agenda or a cause to fight for, something more than just a left-wing sympathy, sentiment or stance, then it was never explicitly pushed in his work. In contrast, films like *High School Girl Guerrilla* maintain an irreverent and markedly critical distance from the revolutionary bodies he portrays, provoking debate as to the ends and means of the act of revolution, and what needs such struggles fulfil for the revolutionaries.

His best-known work, *Sex Play*, poses just such questions, laying out its agenda in its opening moments in a similar manner to *15-Year-Old Prostitute*. The film begins in the midst of a lengthy free-love



above: Eri Ashikawa inspects her fellow revolutionaries' attire in *High School Girl Guerrilla*.
©Wakamatsu Pro



60年代。ピンク映画の創世期を彩り、日本映画史に刻まれる傑作連作。

ピンク映画の創世期を彩り、日本映画史に刻まれる傑作連作。

60年代。ピンク映画の世界

ラポシエロティクス第4弾

荒野のダッチ

日本映画を変革した怪人、大和屋竺によるカルト的名作。
殺し屋の妄想と現実が美しく交錯する不条理劇を、
山下洋輔によるアヴァンギャルドなジャズが彩る伝説のハードボイルドムービー！

大和屋竺

情事の履歴書

自らを翻弄した男達に復讐の炎を燃やす女。
“ピンクの巨匠”若松孝二、反権力・反体制というテーマへの萌芽が見られる記念碑的傑作！

若松孝二

女学生ゲリラ

卒業式粉砕したくらゐ女学生達を描いたアヴァンギャルドムービー！
後に政治活動、傾倒し投獄された伝説的監督・足立正生が描くポップでフレイジーな逸品。

足立正生

8.23[金]発売
各¥3,800

above: Sex Play, '60s style: a *chirashi* announcing the Japanese DVD releases of Atsushi Yamatoya's *Dutch Wife of the Wasteland*, Kôji Wakamatsu's *Chronicle of an Affair* and Masao Adachi's *High School Girl Guerrilla*.

session, taking the form of a 'play' rape being enacted by a group of aimless, listless and politically apathetic students (the names of the characters Ken, Obake and Gaira connect the actors Yoshizawa, Akiyama and Komizu with their roles). As they loaf around reading manga and smoking cigarettes the next morning, before being turfed out onto the streets by the girl whose apartment it is, they banter about how the act of rape might add some more spice to their lives; the difference between 'doing it' for real and merely acting out their fantasies with their complicit girlfriends.

The subtext intended by Adachi informs the rest of the film – that there is a world of difference between direct action politics, and merely talking the talk. The four bored loafers then drive to the university building (in fact Adachi's very own Nihon University) only to find it taken over by student activists, its walls daubed with graffiti, and its doors and windows boarded over. They bundle a girl handing out flyers into the back of their car, drag her off to an abandoned lecture theatre strewn with propaganda leaflets and, making their words reality, rape her. Later, when one of the assailants, Kenji, becomes stricken with remorse, he follows the girl, named Taeko (played by Butoh dancer Natsu Nakajima in her only credited movie performance) back to her home where she lives with her brother, part of a gang of militant student revolutionaries who spend their time making firebombs. Here, not entirely convincingly, she falls in love with him.

An intentional contrast is drawn between Kenji's gang and their politicised radical counterparts, of which Taeko and her brother are members, though Adachi playfully pokes fun at both. The film's pivotal scene sees a newly pregnant Taeko holding court between both factions as she orders whoever would like to claim paternal rights to her unborn child to make love to her there and then. The film suddenly explodes into colour as she strips off her kimono to reveal nothing more than a flower to hide her modesty beneath, its muff-like arrangement of petals representing "the metaphorical 'flower of womanhood' literalized to cover up the female genitalia, banned from the Japanese screen,"¹³⁸ according to David Desser, though he neglects to mention the significance of the flower standing in for this ultimate obscenity: the chrysanthemum is the emblem or crest of the Emperor of Japan. While Kenji rises to the challenge, the revolutionaries flee in shock, comically blowing themselves up in the process, leaving the surviving group to stage their own protests in one of Japanese cinema's most provocative scenes, as they goose-step and *Sieg Heil* outside the Diet Building with the men dressed in Nazi uniforms and the women wearing very little at all.

It is not particularly clear with which group Adachi's sympathies ultimately lie in *Sex Play*, with the



above: Setting the scene for Adachi's *Sex Play* (1969). ©Wakamatsu Pro

sexually-repressed militants coming across more as figures of fun than their more individualistic, sensation-seeking counterparts. The director later discussed *Sex Play* in an interview with Johannes Schönherr: "In that film, I tried to explain that a more emotional motivation creates real human activity. Political activism is okay but at the same time the violent political faction became so ideological, they killed their emotional characters."¹³⁹ In other words, Adachi's belief was that for any revolution to be meaningful, there has to be a balance between heart and head, between conviction and ideology.

As we shall see, the scenes of the hard-line revolutionaries destroyed by their own hands proved remarkably prophetic. It is worth pointing out however that, though Adachi's personal politics were evidently very far left of centre, before moving to the Middle East he had never actually belonged to any political organisation. "So many parties and organisations asked me to become a member. I was ready for that. But then, on the way, they always withdrew their offers," he joked to Schönherr. He kept close to various left-wing movements however, and was present at the numerous demonstrations and protests that occurred not only in Tokyo but also across much of Japan during



above: Pop-art experimentation in *Sex Play* (1969). ©Wakamatsu Pro

the late '60s, filming many of them. It was through this kind of association with the left-wing movement as a whole, rather than any wilful criminal act of his own undertaking, that Adachi ended up wanted by the police throughout much of the '70s, after finding himself accused of defacing a public monument during a demonstration in Hokkaido. Fortunately, it would be a long time before the police finally caught up with him.

During the time he spent writing scripts and directing his own films at Wakamatsu Pro, Adachi – and to a lesser extent Wakamatsu too – attracted the interest of Nagisa Ôshima, who was by now well-established as a guru in the Japanese filmmaking scene of the '60s, akin to Jean-Luc Godard in France. The relationship at first seems an odd one. While Ôshima was roughly the same generation (born 1932, he was four years older than Wakamatsu and seven years older than Adachi), his social and educational background seemed to set him a world apart from the two younger men. What they all shared, of course, was their chosen professions within cinema and an anti-authoritarian stance, though Wakamatsu also seemed aware that Japan's leading film intellectual was less interested in them as people, as friends or equals, than as curiosities, or pet projects.

Ôshima first cast Adachi, and left-wing film critic Masao Matsuda, in *Death By Hanging* (1968), a drama focused around a young Korean sentenced to hang for rape and murder, which took a critical look at the morality of the death penalty and was staged in a self-conscious manner in accordance with the principles of German playwright Bertolt Brecht. Following Shôhei Imamura's reflexive investigation of documentary technique, *A Man Vanishes* (1967), it was only the second title to be produced by the Art Theatre Guild, which up until this time had limited itself to distribution. As well as cutting together the film's trailer, Adachi can be seen in the relatively major

role of the security officer entrusted with pushing the switch that opens the trapdoor to send the sentenced man to his doom, while Matsuda plays the secretary to the public prosecutor. Adachi also co-wrote *Three Resurrected Drunkards* (1968), produced by Ôshima's own company, Sôzôsha, yet distributed by Shochiku and opening only a month after its predecessor. Like *Death By Hanging*, it too shed light on the problem of discrimination against Koreans in Japan, though this time its rather serious message was masked within the format of a mainstream, though rather unorthodoxly-staged, pop music comedy featuring a popular band of the day, the Folk Crusaders. Adachi appeared in a small role in the film as a policeman. The third in this trio of collaborations saw Adachi applying his screenwriting talents once more, this time to the script of Ôshima's celebration of Shinjuku counter-culture, *Diary of a Shinjuku Thief* (1969) set around the district's legendary Kinokuniya book store, and climaxing with one of Jûrô Kara's Red Tent Theatre performances.

The association between Ôshima and Wakamatsu Pro's top writer led to one of Wakamatsu's finest films, the psychedelically-shot *Running in Madness, Dying in Love* (1969). Adachi put together its scenario when he hurriedly decided to accompany Nagisa Ôshima and his crew on the road in Hokkaido, where they were shooting *Boy* (1969), the story of a fugitive family who move around the country earning an ill-gotten living faking traffic accidents involving their ten-year-old son, and demanding compensation from the drivers. In Wakamatsu's film, a young student activist flees from Tokyo with his sister-in-law after he inadvertently shoots his brother, a policeman, during a squabble after a political demo. The two head northwards by train to their hometown through a majestic landscape enveloped in a violent snowstorm, suppressing their guilt and succumbing to their desire for one another as they deliberate over whether they should return to face the music or seal their fate by killing themselves¹⁴⁰ before they reach the end of the line and their past catches up with them.

Ôshima's major impact on Adachi's filmmaking was intellectual; not surprisingly given how the complex modes of expression used for *Death By Hanging*, *Three Resurrected Drunkards* and *Diary of a Shinjuku Thief* were so far removed from commercial mainstream cinema's norms. Ôshima emphasised to Adachi the necessity for a more rigorous theoretical foundation to his filmmaking. And so Adachi came up with *Landscape Theory* (*fûkei-ron*) in collaboration with Matsuda and a third person, Mamoru Sasaki, a Sôzôsha scriptwriter who had worked with Adachi on the Ôshima titles and later enjoyed a successful career writing for television.

Landscape Theory drew attention to the political implications of fixing a landscape on film: how

environment shaped personal and political identity; how State power was embedded in everyday landscape and came to yield its force over the individual; and how it should be represented by filmmakers. Defined more rigorously: "As a theory of filmmaking, the appeal to landscape referred to a privileging of space over time, or their compression into the scene of contemporaneity and ultimately global synchronicity, which would reveal the traces of absent or nameless subjects. In its formulation in Japan, landscape theory reflected the new social situation (sharing a kinship with the situationists in France) and derived from the immense transformation of national space, the subsequent, massive commodification of land and the installation of State power as the dominant figure in the landscape that occurred from the 1970s."¹⁴¹

The Man Who Left His Will on Film (1970), Ôshima's next work after *Boy*, was born out of this discourse surrounding representations of landscapes. The English title is actually taken from the onscreen subtitle that appears before the main title (the direct translation from Japanese is actually 'The Secret Story of the Time after the Tokyo War' – with the 'Tokyo War' referring to the violent actions of the student radicals during the '60s). The film begins with a shaky handheld shot of a normal residential street in Tokyo. Voices are raised on the soundtrack and the image becomes more agitated as an altercation takes place behind the viewfinder of the 16mm Bolex camera used to shoot the scene. Motoki, a young student activist and amateur filmmaker, briefly appears onscreen to beseech the unseen filmmaker to stop shooting mere scenery and instead come and document a major demonstration happening nearby, as planned. The operator instead takes off with the camera down the street, his flight recorded on film as he is pursued by Motoki. As Motoki rounds a corner, he witnesses his filmmaking partner suicidally plunging to his death from the top of a tall building. The police initially violently remove the camera and the reel of used film it contains from the dead man, but they are later returned to the group of amateur filmmakers to which Motoki and the enigmatic figure behind the viewfinder belonged. Members of a leftist student filmmaking collective documenting the various demonstrations that occurred in Tokyo in 1969, they attempt to piece together the events leading up to the filmmaker's death from these everyday street scenes he captured on film.

What Landscape Theory meant in practical terms is best demonstrated by a film made in 1969, though not released until some years later, in 1975, though even then, as it was an experimental film, it was not particularly widely seen. Co-produced by Adachi, Matsuda and Sasaki, *AKA Serial Killer* was made in reaction to the arrest of a 19-year-old youth named

Norio Nagayama for the murder of four people in the years 1968-69, all shot with the same pistol, which had been stolen from the US navy base at Yokosuka. Referred to in the press as the 'Serial Gun Killer' (*renzoku shasatsu-ma*), Nagayama's true-life story suggests a reality far removed from the heartless killing machine that the label implied. Before his arrest he could hardly even read, but during his time in prison he devoted his energies to writing a number of award-winning books, his first being the harrowing description of his childhood, *Tears of Ignorance* (*Muchi no Namida*), first published in 1971. Alas, it was not enough. Sentenced to death in 1979, Nagayama was finally executed in 1997.

Nagayama's story tells of a particularly wretched life. The seventh of eight children born into abject poverty in the remote town of Abashiri in Hokkaido, at a young age his parents abandoned him and his siblings (including a sister who was permanently mentally scarred after being raped) to fend for themselves. As a young teenager, he managed to break out of this oppressive environment by fleeing south to Tokyo, where he subsisted on petty crime and various menial jobs. Twice he tried to stowaway on ships and escape to a new life in America, but both times his attempts met with failure. In 1968, at the end of his tether, he embarked on his notorious spree, eventually killing two taxi drivers and two security guards.

The details of Nagayama's life were recounted in a fictional movie released in 1970, entitled *Live Today, Die Tomorrow!*¹⁴² The film was directed by Kaneto Shindô, a leftist intellectual who saw in Nagayama's case a damning indictment of a society in which certain sectors remained so marginalised and faced with so few choices that they were driven to criminal acts. However, Adachi and his colleagues refused to compromise the details of Nagayama's life to the conceit of a dramatic narrative, fearing that safely packaging it as entertainment was tantamount to removing it to a safe and sanitising fictional fantasy world divorced from the daily experiences of a mass audience. Documentary was too rigid a format as well – too easily corrupted by the will of its maker. Instead, a radical compromise was reached, resulting in an incredible piece of experimental cinema.

Throughout *AKA Serial Killer's* 86 minutes, we are afforded neither a glimpse of the murderer, nor his victims, nor indeed anyone connected with his life. Those who do appear onscreen do so only by coincidence and are not in any way performing for the camera, nor are they mostly even aware of its presence. The scenery is the subject. There is no drama. What remains instead is simply a succession of postcard-like still shots of everyday scenes across Japan, individually isolated from any meaning by those that succeed or follow them, accompanied by a

narrator's atonal account of the basic facts of Nagayama's life, dates reeled off like diary entries of where he was and the time he was there. This voice jostles for attention among the crashing cymbals, drum rolls, twittering flutes, the discordant fanfares and throbs of the improvised accompaniment to these fixed shots: a tumbledown shed, overgrown with weeds; a ferry pulling out of Hokkaido; the rundown streets of a provincial town; jumbled skylines scored with telegraph wires; a construction site in Tokyo; a sign on a wire fence reading 'United States Forces Japan, Area Unauthorized Entry'; neon-lit nightclubs harbouring American servicemen at ease. From the viewpoint of someone feeling increasingly alienated by his surroundings, these everyday scenes begin to look increasingly bizarre and bewildering. Individual cuts become briefer, more abstract, and as we approach the end of Nagayama's journey, are often viewed through fences or barricades, down cordoned-off streets; there are even shots of the exteriors of closed buildings, viewed from the ground looking up. *Kidôtai* police in riot gear parade outside Mitsukoshi department store. An armoured car sits outside Shinjuku Station. These were the landscapes the murderer saw, lived in; landscapes that shaped his destiny.¹⁴³

As a political tool, Landscape Theory emphasised the commonplaceness of manifestations of State power within everyday scenery, and its necessity declined during the '70s with the general calming down of the atmosphere vis-à-vis radical politics and State attempts to curb them. As an aesthetic approach however, it did make something of a re-emergence towards the turn of the millennium, taken up by filmmakers such as Shinji Aoyama, with *To the Alley: Kenji Nakagami's Surviving Film* (2000) and Naomi Kawase, whose beautiful Cannes Camera d'Or award-winning feature debut, *Suzaku* (1997), set within a mountain village location in Nara prefecture, featured a main character who disappears mysteriously midway through the film, leaving only a reel of 8mm film.

What Landscape Theory managed to capture – incredibly effectively – was the violent reality unfolding on the streets of Tokyo at that time, in the scenes of protest and retaliatory action from the riot police such as those in *AKA Serial Killer* and Ôshima's *The Man Who Left His Will on Film*. Members of the militant left-wing Communist League (*Kyôsanshugisha dômei*), known commonly as Bund, having long broken away from the official Japanese Communist Party, were now stepping up their fight against imperialism, especially in the aftermath of the Haneda incidents of 1967. Just as the May '68 student revolts in Paris quickly triggered a general strike that hit the whole of France, and the raucous internal dissent against the Vietnam War on American campuses soon spread to other issues of injustice, the Japanese *gakusei undô*

(student movement) found all manner of further causes for angst. Outside of Vietnam and Anpo, their most immediate concerns were the increases in student tuition fees, as from 1968-69 universities across the country were rocked by riots as part of what is referred to as the All-University Joint Struggle (*zengakukyôtô*, or *zenkyôtô* for short).

The escalating levels of dissent from students quickly led to an increasingly heavy-handed reaction from the police. When, on 17 January, 1968, over eight hundred protestors assembled at the port of Sasebo in Kyûshû to greet the arrival of the world's first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, *U.S.S. Enterprise*, the police used tear gas and high-pressure hoses in a two-day battle that saw 334 arrested and 305 injuries on both sides. The students scored a moral victory in the eyes of the general public at this point, though this wouldn't last long. Many were beginning to see universities no longer as places of learning, but as fostering grounds for young troublemakers. In 1969, student demonstrators with helmets and *geba* sticks joined hands with farmers whose land was about to be grabbed, as 25,000 amassed to lock horns with the law over the construction of a new airport at Narita. The battle was long and bloody, and though not a trace remains in the landscape surrounding Tokyo International Airport today, the struggle was immortalised in the *Sanritsuka* series of films made by Shinsuke Ogawa's documentary group.¹⁴⁴ On 21 October, 1969, Anti-War Day was declared, with 800,000 people gathering in some 800 separate locations across the country. Homemade incendiary devices were thrown at the police by the more militant 'Anti-War' protesters, encased, even more ironically, in large cans used to contain the Japanese cigarette brand named *Peace*. The same year saw 100,000 assembled in Okinawa to demand the reversion of the territory, which had been under American control since the Pacific War, back to Japan.¹⁴⁵

Justifiable as many of these causes might have been, to the average man on the street it was clear that things had spiralled out of control. Already perturbed at the escalating levels of violence at these protests, once the firebombs started flying the public and press lost all sympathy whatsoever, and the more extreme revolutionary elements found themselves stigmatised as 'radicals'. Once the label was applied the situation snowballed, as it gave the relevant parties carte blanche to behave radically, with a number of bank robberies committed to raise funds for further terrorist activities being among the least of the police's worries. To cite but one of many significant events demonstrating just how serious the threat had become, on 3 November, 1969, police rounded up 53 radicals in a dawn raid on an inn in Daibosatsu Pass in the mountains of Yamanashi Prefecture, where they

were 'training'. Here they uncovered an ominous arsenal of pipe bombs, hunting knives and suspicious-looking chemicals alongside manuscripts advocating the overthrow of the Japanese government as a prelude to world revolution.

Of course, not all protesters resorted to violence, but from the various factions and splinter groups that emerged from the Bund, there were many preaching more direct action politics. Two of the most notorious were the Keihin Anti Security Treaty Joint Struggle (*Keihin Anpo Kyôtô*) and the Red Army Faction (*Sekigun-ha*). The former, as the reference to Anpo treaty in their name implies, wanted American troops off Japanese soil and were prepared to go to any lengths to affect this change, while the latter, representing the most militant end of the Bund, preached nothing less than world revolution. The two groups later merged to form the United Red Army (URA, or *Rengô Sekigun*). We shall have a few things to say about these groups in a moment.

On 14 June, 1970, the Anpo treaty was renewed a second time, and as per the decade before, its signing saw a massive demonstration outside the Diet building, and fighting on the streets. The 1970 Anpo protests took place on 23-24 June. Unlike the previous year's Anti-War Day, which had been sponsored by the official political organisations of the Japan Communist Party and the Japan Socialist Party (the JSP, or *Nihon Shakai-tô*), the vast bulk of protesters were students from Bund and its various offshoots.

One week before this, Kôji Wakamatsu began shooting *Sex Jack* from a script by Adachi. Tipped off that one of the venues for the new Anpo demos was Yoyogi Park, near his office in Shinjuku, he went out with his camera and filmed a group of rioters throwing Molotov cocktails at the police. This reportage-style footage was included at the beginning of the film, which depicts a group of young activists, their secret hideaway destroyed in a police raid, who meet a young man wanted for terrorism and are sheltered in his apartment. Conflicts quickly emerge: as in *Sex Play*, Adachi draws a contrast between the pleasure-seeking students, who pass their days concentrating their energies on the group's only girl (*Flesh Market's* Tamaki Katori) in between engaging in circular discussions around political ideology, and the more earnest – not to mention priggish – 'freedom fighter', who finds their hedonistic attitudes unbearable. When the student group discover that, despite his timorous exterior, the solitary revolutionary has been responsible for blowing up a number of *kôban* police boxes while making himself scarce from his apartment at night, they up the ante, and head off to Haneda to hijack a plane to North Korea. As well as giving Wakamatsu plenty of opportunities to indulge in the vicarious onscreen murders of policemen, the director later said

of *Sex Jack*: "I wanted to show the process that leads to the possibilities of infiltrating and undermining revolutionary movements."¹⁴⁶

This final scene is a clear reference to the earlier hijacking of the Japan Air Lines plane the *Yodo*, by members of the Red Army Faction carrying *katana* swords and pipe bombs, on 30 March of that year; while on a routine internal flight from Tokyo to Fukuoka it was redirected to the North Korean capital of Pyongyang. It was one of the most peaceful hijackings in history, with one passenger jokingly stating that JAL's staff could learn a lot about service from the terrorists,¹⁴⁷ though unfortunately future incidents involving Japanese terrorists would not be so bloodless. "At that epoch we all asked ourselves how society was going to evolve, we had great hope of change,"¹⁴⁸ Wakamatsu later said of the period. The hijack was significant in that, as well as being the first in Japanese history, it marked the beginning of the end of '60s idealism, with domestic dreams of peaceful revolution dashed as the New Left's extreme elements brought their anti-imperialistic struggle violently to the international stage. It is through contemporary newspaper headlines of this major media event, alongside a cunningly constructed stills photo montage, that the hijack is reconstructed in *Sex Jack*. The obviously limited budget at disposal for the production was counterbalanced by the short time that elapsed from the film's conception to its first screening, so this device – carried over from Wakamatsu's earlier films – proved not only an expedient method of opening up the drama from the claustrophobic setting of the apartment where the bulk of it takes place; it also convincingly added the frisson of stitching the story and characters into a setting very much 'of the day'. *Sex Jack* might be fiction, but one gets the feeling that much of what it portrays was not so far from the truth.

Rather than the more violent and sadistic *Violated Angels*, it was this film – relatively mild in terms of its sexual content – that caused the biggest outcry when Wakamatsu brought them both to France the following year. Playing at the Cannes Film Festival in 1971, as part of the Director's Fortnight (Quinzaine des réalisateurs) section initiated by Jean-Luc Godard two years earlier, *Sex Jack's* final scene of the terrorist heading off to assassinate the Prime Minister later led the censors in France to label the film 'anti-social' and ban it. (Recalling Wakamatsu's earlier observation that killing politicians and figures of authority in film was less likely to land one in jail than actually committing the act for real, it is worth quoting a more recent comment from the director in the *Korea Times* at the time of the release of his 2005 film *Cycling Chronicles: Landscapes the Boy Saw*: "The problem with Koizumi is that he's just a wagging dog for America. Worse, he has never experienced war, while, unfortunately, all the

Japanese politicians who had lived during war times and could speak with wisdom about what war is are now dead or retired. We are now confronted with a spectacle I'm most afraid of, as Japan is making the same mistakes it did in the past, just by sheer ignorance. Contemporary Japanese society and Prime Minister Koizumi are making me so mad that, if terrorism was not a crime, I would kill him myself!"¹⁴⁹

Wakamatsu and Adachi's trip to Cannes as part of a Japanese delegation led by Nagisa Ôshima, whose *The Man Who Left His Will on Film* (playing under the title *Il est mort après la guerre / He Died After the War*) and his latest work at the time, *The Ceremony* (1971), were also screening during the Director's Fortnight, might be viewed as the high watermark of their respective filmmaking careers. John Lennon and Yoko Ono were also in town, though according to David Robinson in the *Financial Times* their personal presence was, "more appreciated than their film *Apotheosis*."¹⁵⁰ None of the British press covered either the Lennons' or Wakamatsu's films in any detail at this time, though John and Yoko (and apparently a handful of Black Panther activists) did see *Sex Jack*, with the new Mrs. Lennon, who also presented *Fly* at the festival, clearly remembering the shared episode with Wakamatsu in Belgium five years earlier.

The Cannes Festival marked a turning point for Wakamatsu Pro, but one already anticipated by films like *Shinjuku Mad* and *Sex Jack*, whose erotic scenes were pretty sparse and uninvolved considering the target *eroduction* market. While his work was as popular as ever, he was clearly getting bored of making this sort of film, and discussed as much with Adachi. Both were looking for new challenges to take them away from this *dokuritsu* independent circuit and allow them to sink their teeth into something more meaningful, more important.

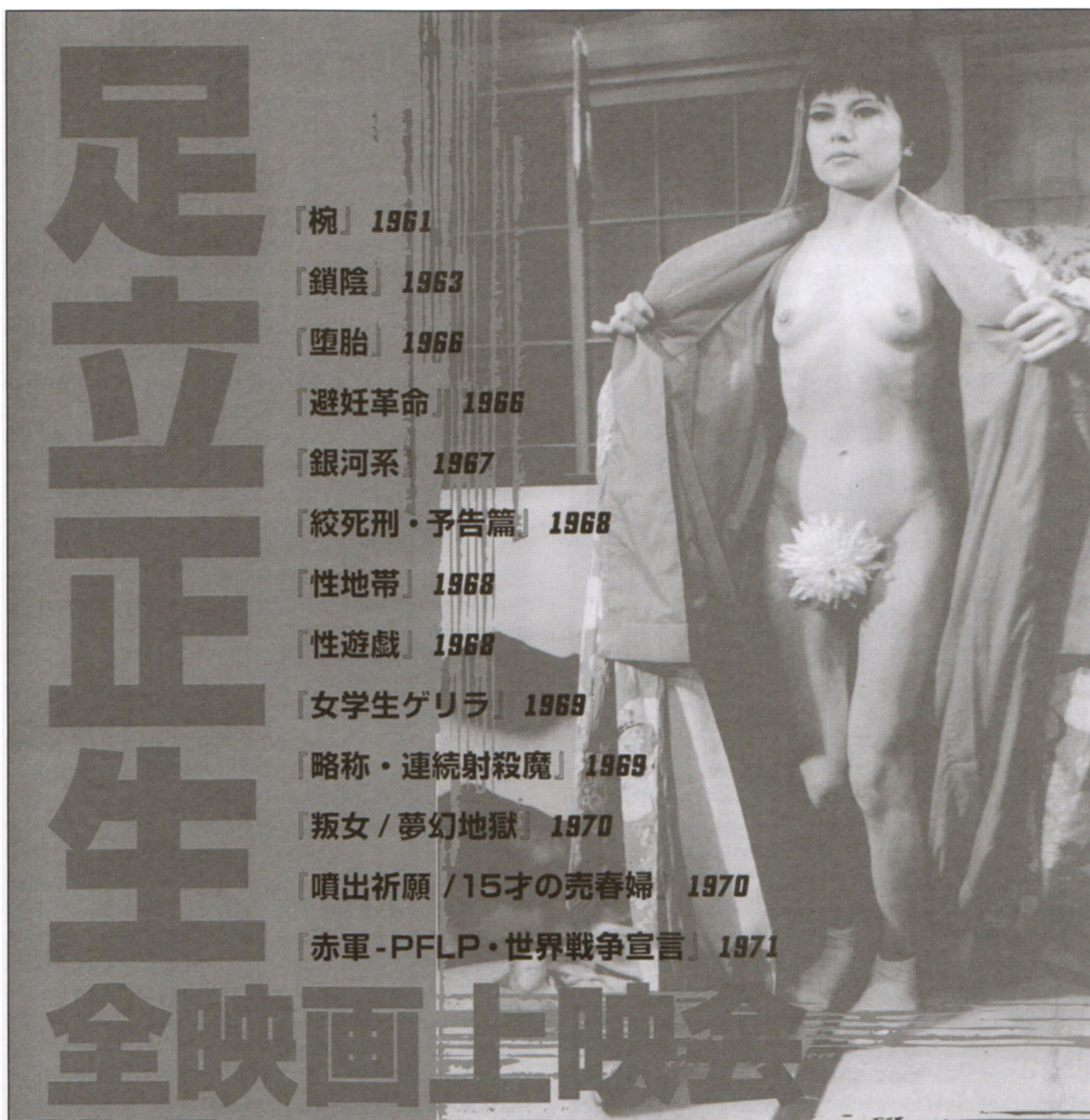
It is here that the story becomes complicated; not because the basic facts haven't been recounted by either Wakamatsu and Adachi, but because the original motivations of both men are less than clear, as well as being clearly different from one another. As mentioned, Adachi's scripts often come across as ironically distanced from the revolutionary movement, whereas more recent comments from Wakamatsu suggest his own love affair with the underground was primarily due to commercial motivation rather than political conviction, something recognised by the contemporary French critic Hubert Niogret when *Sex Jack* played at Cannes: "An advocate of the Japanese leftist movement and of sexual rebellion, Koji Wakamatsu seems to be rather an opportunist filmmaker, disguised as a leftist, who basks in pseudo-revolutionary dreams but only when they stand to turn him a profit. That Nagisa Oshima sees in these films a disobedience towards authority – and the defence of acts of 'terrorism and of individual

destruction' is perhaps to grant too much value to a filmmaker like Koji Wakamatsu – but it is, for Oshima, to find in Wakamatsu an element that is at the heart of *The Man Who Left His Will on Film*, i.e. the problem of left-wing movements which become aware of a new stage and feel the need to step up their fight against authority."¹⁵¹

Nevertheless, it is apparent that both men moved in circles very closely aligned to several political extremists who took a decisive and violently active role in bringing their gripes to the rest of the world. Wakamatsu recalls that it was Adachi who put forward a solution to their doldrums: "You know the girl with the long hair who used to collect funds in the Capricorn bar in Shinjuku? She's called Fusako Shigenobu. She's a student at Meidai [Meiji University], now she's living in an Arab country."¹⁵² The girl with the long hair was yet to become the infamous 'Red Queen', responsible for spearheading a number of terrorist attacks across the world, but she would provide the key for the next eventful stages in the lives of the two filmmakers.

On the other side of the world, the ongoing conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbours reached a new level with the Six Day War of June 1967, in which Israel invaded and annexed the territories of the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights, and the West Bank from the surrounding countries of Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt. Previously part of the British Mandate of Palestine, the West Bank had officially fallen under Jordanian administration following the Arab-Israeli War that saw the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. It was home to a sizeable population of Palestinian Arabs, around a third of them refugees who had been driven from their towns and villages in areas that had become part of the new Zionist state. For two decades, many young Arabs had longed for the return of their homelands, leading to the formation of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) in 1964. With the Arab defeat in 1967, it was clear that the return of the Israeli-occupied territories was going to prove impossible by conventional strategic or political means. An armed war against the oppressors, waged by the people themselves, was the only solution, and so that year the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) was established by Dr. George Habash and Abu Ali Mustafa, functioning as a faction of the PLO founded on Marxist/Maoist principles.

Unlike the Vietnam War, the plight of the Palestinian refugees was not widely known or discussed in Japan, hence certainly not seen as a cause to get worked up over – with the exception of one notable group. Originally established in Lebanon in 1971 as the Arab Red Army, the Japanese Red Army (JRA or *Nihon Sekigun*) was an offshoot of the Red Army Faction whose members had been responsible



足立正生 全映画上映会

『梔』 1961
『鎖陰』 1963
『墮胎』 1966
『避妊革命』 1966
『銀河系』 1967
『絞死刑・予告篇』 1968
『性地帯』 1968
『性遊戯』 1968
『女学生ゲリラ』 1969
『略称・連続射殺魔』 1969
『叛女 / 夢幻地獄』 1970
『噴出祈願 / 15才の売春婦』 1970
『赤軍 - PFLP - 世界戦争宣言』 1971

MASAO ADACHI

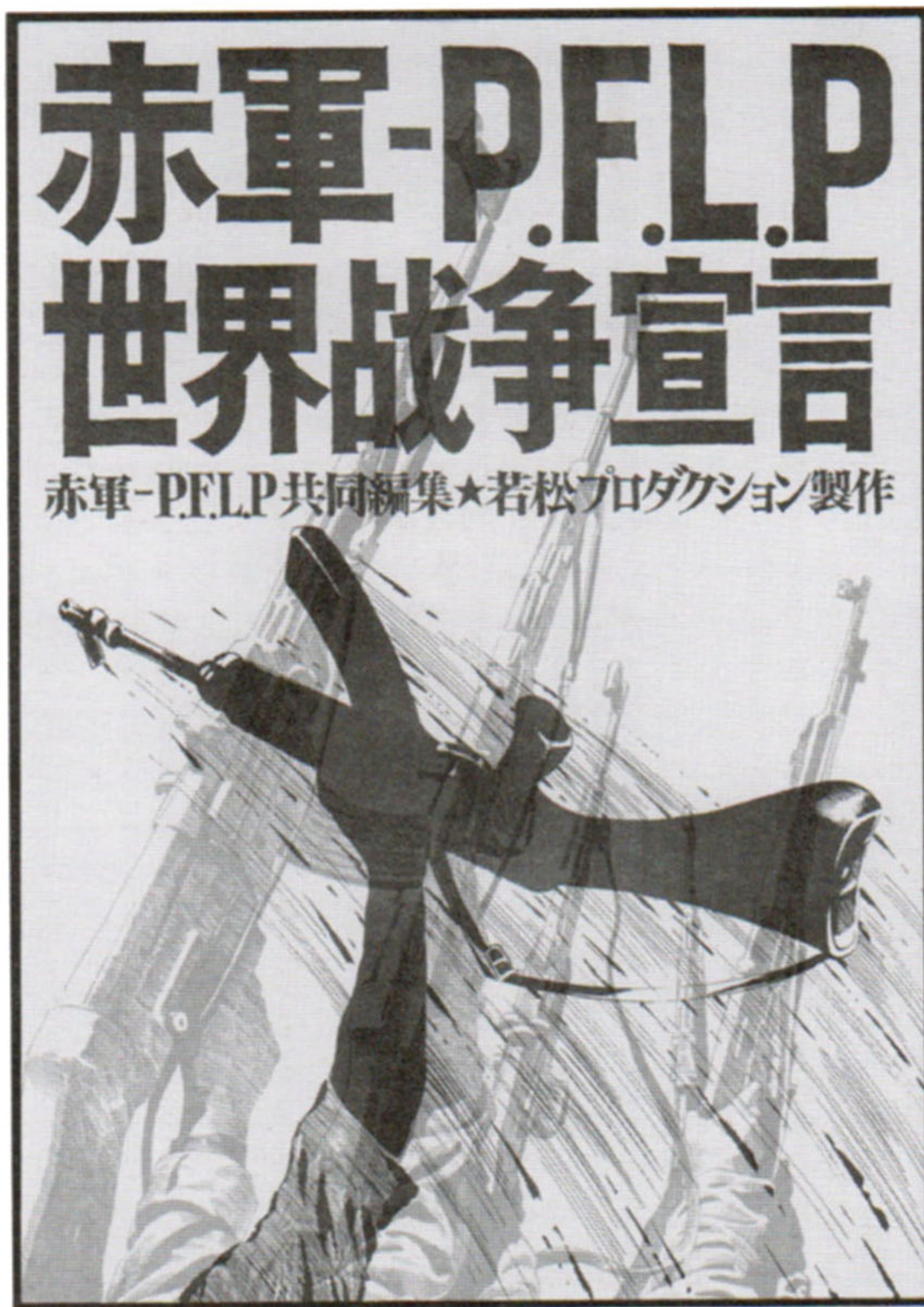


足立正生よ、君はいま何を考え、何を見ているのか。
大島渚
「オーテの眼を光らせてネプチューンの砂漠に立つ足立君。流石の東洋より来たのだ、乾杯」
唐十郎

アートシアター新宿文化、蠟座の実験は、足立正生とともにあった。
葛井欣士郎

アッちゃん。帰ってくんなら、また、一緒に映画でも撮るか!!
若松孝二

above: *Chirashi* for a retrospective of Masao Adachi's works after his return from the Middle East.
The dominant image is of the Butoh dancer Natsuo Nakajima unfurling her kimono in one of the director's best-known titles, *Sex Play* (1969).



above: Poster for *Red Army / PFLP: Declaration of World War* (1971), Wakamatsu Pro's newsreel about the Palestinian predicament, directed by Masao Adachi and Masao Matsuda. ©Wakamatsu Pro

for the *Yodo* hijacking. Its leader, Fusako Shigenobu, had broken away from its umbrella organisation, along with a handful of other disenchanted members, believing it to be paralysed by its fixation on political theory and the delusional belief that Japan presented a suitable base from which to conduct world revolution. In order to push the fight on to the next level, Shigenobu successfully managed to establish an alliance between her group and the PFLP, which at this point were training several thousand guerrillas. This partnership between these two very different cultures might initially seem bizarre. However, both groups saw the Palestinian struggle in broader terms as part of a wider uprising against Western imperialism – the role of the United Nations, and more specifically America and Britain, in creating the mess in the Middle East, could hardly be overlooked. To young Japanese radicals, this remote people's war must have seemed as noble and romantic as the Spanish Civil War did to the various European ideologues in the latter half of the 1930s, and so the Japanese brought financial and intellectual support to the Palestinians, as well as highlighting their plight back home.

On their way back from the Cannes Film Festival, Wakamatsu and Adachi stopped off in Beirut. Their aim was to make a film that documented the

Palestinians' struggle for the return of their lands, though it is doubtful whether either really knew what they were getting into. They were not the first to try such a thing, and they knew it too. The events in France in 1968 had spurred the country's most influential director, Jean-Luc Godard, into adopting an even more politicised view of film and filmmaking; unsurprisingly given the role cinema had played in heralding the protests. Along with other committed communist filmmakers like Jean-Pierre Gorin, Godard established the Dziga Vertov group, named after the Russian director of the *Kino-Pravda* ('film truth') agitprop newsreels of the 1920s and the pioneering portrait of the new Soviet Union in all its youthful dynamism, *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929). Numerous politically motivated works appeared under this co-authorial credit before the group disbanded in 1972. Before then, in 1970, however, Godard and Gorin had been invited by Al Fatah, the PLO's largest faction, to make a documentary about the Palestinian guerrillas. Entitled *Jusqu'à la victoire* (*Until Victory*), the project was eventually abandoned over halfway through due to many of its subjects being killed during filming.

As well as sharing a similar political ethos, it is easy to detect throughout Adachi's oeuvre parallels with Godard's investigations into the politics of the image and the pursuit of a cinematic form that created a direct dialogue with its viewer. Both strove to create a cinema more actively experienced than passively witnessed. It is also apparent that there was a certain amount of goading on Adachi's part for Wakamatsu and he to try where Godard had failed, and Wakamatsu eagerly rose to the challenge. At this time, Fusako Shigenobu was just setting up the JRA in Lebanon. After the two men managed to locate her in Beirut, she showed them around and helped set up interviews with several key members of the PFLP, including: Leila Khaled, the glamorous freedom-fighting figurehead responsible for the prominent hijacking of TWA Flight 840 en route from Rome to Athens in 1969, hair bobbed like Godard's own muse, Anna Karina; the group's leader, Dr. George Habash; his second in command, Abu Ali Mustafa; a young freedom fighter from France, demonstrating it was not only the Japanese joining the struggle. Naturally, Shigenobu herself was also interviewed. They filmed Palestinian refugee camps on the West Bank, and for about a fortnight they stayed at a PFLP guerrilla training camp in the Golan Heights, an area crawling with Israeli soldiers, then moved on to the mountains of Jarash on the Jordanian border with Israel, before Wakamatsu returned to the relative normality of his life in Japan to suss out the logistics of getting the work seen as widely as possible once it was finished. He left Adachi with Shigenobu to stay a few weeks longer filming in Lebanon.

The experience clearly touched both of them deeply, though in different ways: "I realised how poor my own thinking was and I keenly felt the desire of the Palestinians, a driven people without a homeland. Adachi's thoughts were perhaps more theoretical. I think my own feelings were more physical than his. When I think about myself objectively, I always feel extremely happy. For instance, I often think about how bad things are in Japan, but that is because it is such a rich country. Japan hasn't been colonised either. I've been discriminated against for making *pinku eiga* all along, but when I saw the resistance of the Palestinian people I knew that I must not capitalise on them and make them the object of a desire for profits. In any case, I wanted to let the Japanese know about the situation of the Palestinians. I wanted them to see how they live. I didn't care about any movement. Adachi was different, but I wasn't interested in movements."¹⁵³

Red Army / PFLP: Declaration of World War was assembled in Japan, with Adachi largely responsible for the completed version, with further input from Masao Matsuda. It is not possible however to ascertain the exact level of input of everyone behind the scenes, which included a number of figures associated with both Wakamatsu Pro and the Red Army Faction. No individual credits appear on the film itself, and it was never 'officially' released, but alongside Matsuda and Adachi, the JMDB lists the names of Aoi Nakajima, Susumu Iwabuchi, Fusako Shigenobu and Mutsuhiro Toura (an actor whose association with Ōshima stretched back to his Shochiku days). Neither, incidentally, are any of those who appear in the film identified by their names. It received its first screening in Tokyo on 30 September, 1971, though as we shall see, under fairly unusual circumstances.

Godard finally completed his film five years later, after the Dziga Vertov group had disbanded. By this time a series of increasingly violent terrorist acts, such as the kidnap and murder of eleven Israeli athletes by the Palestinian extremist group the Black September Organisation at the Munich Olympics of 1972, not to mention several incidents involving the JRA, had turned the tide of global public opinion and had the adverse effect of overshadowing the terrible living conditions of the Palestinians in the occupied territories that they were trying to draw the world's attention to. An increasingly complicated picture of the region's political situation was emerging and being broadcast by the global media. The 16mm raw footage that was to have formed the basis of *Until Victory* found itself edited accordingly, part of an experimental visual essay comprised of film and video that paralleled the lives of a Palestinian family and a middle-class French family. The images were accompanied by self-reflective title cards and a commentary by Anne-Marie Miéville which, as the title

Ici et ailleurs (Here and Elsewhere) indicates, questioned the modes of representation and reconstruction intrinsic within the media. The finished picture was not concerned with portraying the 'real' lives of the Palestinians, because the very act of committing these to film and bringing them to a French audience meant that 'they' could never be more than symbols of something bigger.

Adachi, like Godard, approached the subject from a theoretical position, with Landscape Theory proving potentially well suited to drawing the link between a dispossessed people and the environment they inhabited yet did not control. Godard however had the advantage of five years to reflect on his own position vis-à-vis the Palestinian situation, and, it should be added, a certain degree of autonomy over the finished product, because while the original film had been commissioned by the PLO, final production was completed under his own steam. Adachi would have been well advised to let just the images speak for themselves. Instead of depicting the lives of people caught up in a complex political situation far removed from the experience of its viewers, *Declaration of World War*, if its title didn't already make plain, is essentially a propaganda film, made with the express intention of recruiting hot-headed would-be revolutionaries to the cause.

After the opening voiceover announces "a News Film to build a worldwide Red Army", the film begins by presenting newsreel footage of the Yodo hijacking and scenes of the Narita airport protests at Sanritsuka filmed from a television screen, accompanied by the revolutionary rhetoric of various Red Army and PFLP members. The location then changes to the Middle East, the soundtrack continuing as it presents images of everyday street scenes, like *AKA Serial Killer*, except that the camera, filming through the front windshield of a car, is moving. Unlike Adachi's first application of Landscape Theory however, the emphasis soon changes from the everyday environment of the Palestinians to the revolutionary figures within it: guerrillas thread bullet belts into machine guns, or sit gathered in a circle beneath an olive tree, clutching copies of Chairman Mao's Red Book; dark silhouettes armed to the hilt crawl through the foothills at dusk; a woman strips a self-loading rifle.

That two Japanese filmmakers should have found themselves so far removed from their element during filming, strangers in a strange land in the midst of an insurrectionary movement at a time when world travel was prohibitively expensive, is a remarkable enough occurrence in itself. It lends the matter-of-fact portrayal of such details as the bullet holes riddling the base-camp walls or the fighters cooking their breakfast over a gas camping stove in a bare room furnished only with guns and ammo a unique degree of historical interest. But *Declaration of World War*



above: Cover of the original Japanese press book for *Ecstasy of the Angels* (1972), or as it was then known in the English language, *Angelic Orgasm*.

essentially comes across mainly as a crude collage of travelogue scenes, with long sequences of scenery filmed through the windshields of moving vehicles, the images accompanied by large tracts of silence, or the overdubbed voices of the interviewees. While the *Landscape Theory* should promote awareness of the relationship between what actually appears on screen and the spectatorial position of the camera, *Declaration of World War* fundamentally fails to put the viewer in the shoes of the guerrillas in the same way that *AKA Serial Killer* did with Norio Nagayama. Most perturbing are the austere titles that break up the image sequences, bearing text such as 'The Best Form of Propaganda Is Armed Struggle' or 'Armed Struggle Is Reality' – slogans originating from the mouth of Abu Ali Mustafa, which reach a crescendo at the end of the film: "The Creation of a Revolutionary Front Means Armed Struggle"; "Revolution Is World War"; "World War"; "Revolution"; "Revolution = World War"; "Armed Struggle!"; "Take Up Your weapons!"; "Gun"; "Bullet"; "Weapon"; "Muzzle"; "Trigger".

Wakamatsu's later verdict was that, "the final film, which was edited by Adachi, turned out very differently from what I had imagined. See, this is what happens if Adachi and Masao Matsuda get a free hand, I said to myself after watching the film. At the time I did

not yet have a well-founded theoretical basis to oppose them, however. Today I would object and say, all you do is talk, what can you really do to change the situation?"¹⁵⁴ For Adachi however, "The Red Army / PFLP was made as a declaration and not as a documentary. The screening itself was my cinema movement. It was a campaign movement against the so-called radical armed struggle policy in Japan at that time. And through conducting screenings throughout Japan, I met so many people and activists and talked with them before the screenings."¹⁵⁵

The manner of circulating the film to which Adachi refers, which looked "not only to the content of film, but also to the importance of screenings as a movement",¹⁵⁶ was the Red Bus Screening Troop (*Akabasu jôeitai*), a minibus painted bright red that drove around the country bringing the film directly to its audiences. Turning the screenings into events not only harked back to the earlier 'happenings' of the VAN days; it can also be compared to the screening methods adopted by other leftist filmmakers like Shinsuke Ogawa. Unable to show his 16mm documentaries about the protests against the construction of Narita airport in conventional cinemas, Ogawa took them to venues such as film clubs, civic buildings and university campuses. Such kinds of cine-activist movements, again like Godard's Dziga Vertov Group, had been cropping up all over the world during the late '60s, and not entirely independently of one another. There was also the Newsreel movement in America that had been inaugurated in New York City at the end of 1967 by Jonas Mekas, who gathered a group of young filmmakers – including the likes of Marvin Fishman, Robert Kramer, Jon Jost and Christine Choy – who made films about the Black Panthers, the anti-Vietnam demonstrations, rioting students at Columbia University, striking refuse collectors, the 1968 Miss America beauty pageant that saw a sheep placed on the catwalk by feminist protestors, and various other political hot potatoes. Ogawa Productions introduced a number of these works, in dubbed versions, to Japanese audiences, acting as part of a network involved in swapping and distributing the films with similar organisations in countries as diverse as France, Germany, and Cuba.¹⁵⁷

Still, this method of screening *Declaration of World War* outside the confines of the capitalist modes of production and consumption might not have been quite as premeditated as Adachi suggests. Wakamatsu's original plan had been to sell the finished documentary to television, but it soon became clear that Adachi's film was hardly going to be embraced by the general public. Kinshirô Kuzui agreed to show the film at ATG's Shinjuku Bunka Theatre, but this was cancelled due to pressure from the police, who feared that such incendiary subject matter would trigger a riot. The cause for concern was



above: Reign of terror: Wakamatsu's startlingly prophetic *Ecstasy of the Angels* (1972). ©Wakamatsu Pro

understandable enough; a number of Red Army members under observation by the police in the wake of the Yodo hijacking had been seen going in and out of Wakamatsu Pro's office during the film's production. Still, the film's reputation among curious viewers had nevertheless preceded it, and so seeing a large crowd gathered outside the venue eager to watch it, Wakamatsu managed to organise a one-off screening in the nearby Shinjuku Keiô Meiga-za, whose manager he was friendly with.

It has been pointed out, as much by himself as by others, that Wakamatsu, despite his anti-authoritarian stance, "actually hates any kind of political or artistic movement."¹⁵⁸ Despite Wakamatsu's ambivalent opinion of the finished film, he nevertheless stood by his bastard offspring. After its first airing on 30 September, 1971, the Red Bus, purchased by Wakamatsu's company, set off from Tokyo on its nationwide tour while regional police forces and, more significantly, rival left-wing student groups did their utmost to hinder screenings of the film, now being referred to covertly by the acronym *Aka-P*. While he refrained from accompanying the Red Bus Screening Troop on the tour, there was little he could do to dissociate himself from his original involvement: the

names of neither Adachi nor Matsuda, nor indeed anyone else, appear anywhere on the print, but the opening title card, while tactically crediting the 'Editing Collective: Red Army – PFLP' (*Kyôdô henshû: sekigun – PFLP*) as the makers of the film, proudly announces Wakamatsu Pro as the production company.

Wakamatsu immediately began setting himself up for his next project, entitled *Ecstasy of the Angels*. Again, Adachi wrote the script behind the customary Deguchi Izuru penname, but there was a major difference with this production. While Adachi and Wakamatsu had been organising screenings of their films at the Sasori-za for several years by this time, ATG had never come onboard and helped with funding. The type of film Wakamatsu Pro made generally wasn't exactly their thing, and ATG themselves only had the facilities to produce a handful of titles every year (the ATG productions released in 1971 were Toshio Matsumoto's *Pandemonium*, Shûji Terayama's *Throw Away Your Books and Go Out Into the Streets*, Nagisa Ôshima's *The Ceremony*, and Akio Jissôji's *Mandala*).

Nevertheless, Wakamatsu's films were undeniably popular. Following *Sex Jack* he'd made a number of titles aimed more directly at the *eroduction* circuit, including *Karma Sutra: Love Technique*, its follow-up



above: Friday (Rie Yokoyama) begins her solitary bombing campaign in Wakamatsu's *Ecstasy of the Angels* (1972). ©Wakamatsu Pro



Continuing Love Technique: Acts of Love, and *Sex Cycle: The Woman Who Wants to Die*, which had all performed well. Yet as a director he was clearly interested in moving on from the erotic underground, which in any case was very soon to become mainstreamed as the major studio Nikkatsu climbed onto the bandwagon. With ATG's involvement, the budget for *Ecstasy of the Angels* was in excess of the ¥10 million mark, with Wakamatsu's company covering half of this (and allegedly quite a bit more). Though this was a standard figure for an ATG production, it was Wakamatsu's most expensive project to date.

Ecstasy of the Angels can be described as a direct continuation of *Sex Jack*, and like that film it had its finger firmly on the pulse of the youth movement while anticipating events that even the wildest imagination could never have predicted. "Considering the time and circumstances I concluded that a revolutionary movement was underway. In Palestine I had realised that the people had nothing left but to fight. I envisioned that the next step would be guerrilla warfare and bombings."¹⁵⁹ In Tokyo and Osaka, the explosive campaigns anticipated in *Sex Jack* had become a reality, as the Red Army Faction effectively began blowing up police *kôban*. Several such attacks occurred in the environs of the Shinjuku Bunka theatre during the editing of the new film, including the so-called Christmas Tree Bombing that occurred in December 1971, and a 'Peace bomb' flung at a *kôban* by an anonymous figure shortly after a similar such scene had been shot for the film in the very same location. The police knew of Wakamatsu's association with several Red Army Faction members, so the offices were raided and Wakamatsu and his lead actor were interrogated. "They maintained we had used the film shooting only as a pretence, and made a mountain out of a molehill."¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the film came to be made and seen.

Without any knowledge of the politics of the period, *Ecstasy of the Angels* makes for very complicated and possibly not very satisfactory viewing.¹⁶¹ The story takes as its starting point a true event, the Asaka Incident of 22 August, 1971, in which members of the Red Army Faction raided Asaka military base, resulting in the death of a Self Defence Force officer. The film opens in the midst of a similar attack on a US military base by a fictional terrorist unit named The October Group, as they attempt to steal weapons. Part of a larger revolutionary organisation named The Four Seasons,¹⁶² with exception of its leader, October (played by Ken Yoshizawa), each member is named after a day of the week. The break-in ends in chaos, with the revolutionaries caught red-handed by US soldiers. Three of the group are shot dead and October is left blinded, after assistance from the backup September group fails to materialise. After the surviving members regroup, October's apartment

hideout is raided by members of the affiliated February faction, who rough them up and demand to know the whereabouts of the stolen arsenal. It soon becomes clear that the original attack had been set up by the wider organisation to fail, with the October group considered too slack in both its sexual mores and its adherence to group ideology to prove trustworthy. The October group retaliate by breaking away from the main party and stepping up their activities, in the film's final scenes unleashing a catastrophic wave of bombing raids onto the streets of Shinjuku and onwards across the nation.

It is uncanny how prophetic Wakamatsu's film would prove to be. Adachi's script was apparently conceived back in 1969, the year of the Anti-War Day and the Narita airport protests at Sanritsuka, in which it was already possible to detect schisms emerging between the various factions within the student movement, each with their individual twists on Marxist theory and incompatible ideas about how it should be applied. But just how self-destructive the increased factionalism of the radical left-wing movement as a whole had become was revealed several weeks before the scheduled release of *Ecstasy of the Angels*, when it came to light that over the latter half of the previous year the United Red Army – the short-lived offspring of the Red Army Faction and the Keihin Anti Security Treaty Joint Struggle – had carried out a series of brutal murders of their own members, resulting in no less than twelve former revolutionaries stabbed, battered or left to freeze to death in the mountains, either for deviations from group thinking, or failing to fully channel their libidos into revolutionary zeal.

The full horror of this internecine slaughter, which later provided Kazuyoshi Kumakiri with the raw material for his 1997 debut *Kichiku*, really only came to light after a further event that saw the United Red Army so far out on a limb that there was simply no way back. The ten-day siege known as the Asama Mountain Lodge Incident (*Asama Sansô Jiken*) began on 19 February, 1972, when five United Red Army members holed up in a remote inn near Mount Asama, in the environs of the resort town of Karuizawa in Nagano Prefecture, taking the wife of the lodge-keeper hostage. The police were called in, and after a lengthy standoff in which they set up camp outside the radicals' new mountain stronghold, events came to a head on 28 February, when they successfully stormed the lodge, though not without the tragic deaths of two officers. The incident provided the Japanese media with the biggest news story in its history, with a staggering peak of 89.7% of the population glued to their TV screens as the United Red Army radicals were eventually captured and arrested.

It was on 11 March, 1972, in the aftermath of this groundbreaking event, that *Ecstasy of the Angels* opened at the Shinjuku Bunka, and while its timeliness





above: The revolutionary dream for a new Japan implodes, in the iconic climax of *Ecstasy of the Angels* (1972). ©Wakamatsu Pro

accounted for much of its initial popularity, it also led to a far shorter run than was usual. Once again, the venue came under pressure from the police who, fully aware of Wakamatsu Pro's Red Army links, regarded the film as dangerous. However, this time ATG had money invested in the film, and contracts had been signed. Kuzui also wanted the film screened. As the producer at ATG, he championed the artistic freedom of his filmmakers. Toho, ATG's parent company and the main source of its funding, was less enthusiastic, but Kuzui refused to budge from his position. Nevertheless, following this brief run in Shinjuku, perhaps made nervous by the ongoing police surveillance of Wakamatsu Pro, the company more or less washed their hands of the film, and it did not go on to play anywhere else in the country.¹⁶³ Curiously, despite this, *Secret Flower*, one of Wakamatsu's pink films from the previous year, was shown by ATG a month later.

As the Red Bus containing the print of *Aka-P* continued to trundle around the country, Wakamatsu's involvement with it continued to dog him, though this time due to circumstances far beyond his control; namely, the subsequent actions of one of the young men who joined Adachi and the dozen or so other members of the Red Bus Screening Troop, a certain Kôzô Okamoto. He was the younger brother of one of the original 'Yodo Five' (*Yodo-go*) hijackers now holed up in North Korea, Takeshi Okamoto, and it seems that it was more through this fraternal connection than any firmly-held political convictions that he became associated with the Red Army. His own university in Kyûshû, where he was studying agriculture, didn't have a branch of the organisation. Due to his brother's links however, he had been contacted to find a venue to screen the Palestine film.

The consequences of this meeting were tragic. It is not entirely clear by which process Okamoto's downfall was hastened, but on 30 May, 1972, alongside fellow JRA members Tsuyoshi Okudaira and Yasuyuki Yasuda, he became one of the perpetrators of a terrorist attack at Ben Gurion International Airport in Lod, near Tel Aviv. Conducted on behalf of the PFLP, the Lod Airport Massacre was the first, and by far the most vicious, event in a campaign of terror conducted by the JRA that was to persist over the next two decades. Twenty four civilians were gunned down in cold blood and a further eighty injured. Seventeen of the casualties weren't even Israelis, but Puerto Rican Catholics on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Okamoto was the only one of the three to survive this planned suicide mission, after the grenade with which he was to kill himself failed to detonate. After demanding that he represent himself at trial, he pleaded guilty and begged for the death penalty. He was instead sentenced to life imprisonment, remaining in solitary confinement in Israel for the next 13 years.

It should be acknowledged that what actually happened on that horrific day is still a matter of dispute. According to Dr. Patricia Steinhoff, Professor of Sociology at the University of Hawaii, who spoke to Okamoto in Israel shortly after the incident and has spent the past 35 years researching the history of the New Left in Japan, the narrative that subsequently emerged through the international news media might only be part of the story. According to her, the attack was never meant to be a suicide mission, and any deaths were accidental. In an interview with W. David Marx of the *Néojaponisme* website, she stated: "All the information after the attack was coming from the Israeli government and then through to the Japanese government and the mass media... The other part of the situation, which has been public for some time, as soon as people closer to the participants could get into the debate, concerns the issue of crossfire. I was in that airport right after the trial ended. It was still all shot up, but there was a tremendous lot of security in that airport, and there is a kind of narrow balcony along one side of the baggage claim area that had armed security standing up there. So when they went in there, they pulled out weapons and started doing whatever they were doing with them, but the Israelis were shooting back at them. That never came out in the public accounts. It appears as if three guys killed all those people and injured all those people, and everyone else was peacefully sitting there saying, oh my goodness, when in fact, a lot of people were probably killed in crossfire. We don't know, and I'm sure nobody ever looked to see whose gun did what because only the Israelis had control of the scene after it happened, and it certainly was not in their interest to indicate that anybody might have been shot by Israeli security. What we have is an account that is a public account that makes it look as if the Israelis did nothing to create those deaths and injury, and that's simply not the case."¹⁶⁴

While the Lod Airport incident was the only time the JRA was responsible for the death of innocent civilians, in the ensuing decades Shigenobu's organisation continued with a string of further terrorist acts across the world, including Singapore, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Malaysia and the United States, while also extending their links to Colonel Gaddafi's regime in Libya. And yet in Japan, the revolution had effectively been quashed. The end of the siege at Asama marked an evolutionary dead-end for more than just the particular ideological strand of the United Red Army; its repercussions reached further into Japanese society. Politicians immediately levied the blame against Japan's universities, calling for administrators to keep a tighter check on the activities of their students, while employers started refusing to take on those who'd been involved in any radical political organisation during their years of higher education.

Ôshima, for whom cinema and politics were inseparable, opines in his 1994 television documentary, *100 Years of Japanese Cinema*, that since the Asama Mountain Lodge Incident, "young people have failed to play any role in Japanese history". Clearly a new era was underway. For one thing, a marked rise in the standard of living of the overall population had rather taken the sting out of those with an axe to grind against the capitalist system. For another, with the arrival of Roman Porno, sex films could no longer be considered an underground phenomenon. Meanwhile, as the Vietnam War dragged on for another three years, until 1975, the continuing protests all over the world began to lose any sense of urgency. Okinawa reverted back to Japan on 15 May, 1972, even though a large garrison of American troops remained. Ôshima's *Dear Summer Sister*, set in this subtropical archipelago, opened at ATG's Shinjuku Bunka just a week before. It was the last film he would make using Japanese money for over a quarter of a century.

The migration of Ôshima to foreign pastures is indicative of the way in which the bastion of youth counterculture provided by ATG, and the Shinjuku district in general, so rapidly lost its cutting edge status. As the Japanese critic Inuhiko Yomota waxes nostalgically in an article entitled 'Deux où trois choses que je sais d'ATG,' "The utopian ideal of linking art with politics in a vanguard movement was abandoned and the mores of the young people who gathered in Shinjuku changed completely. They lost the excitement of being part of a large crowd, falling into cynicism and nihilism, and were swallowed up by the prevailing culture of mass consumption. High-rise buildings rose over West Shinjuku. Soon it was no big deal to travel abroad. People's lives became so comfortable that it surprised even themselves. Nursing a single cup of coffee while debating philosophy or hard to understand films became old-fashioned. Almost overnight the arts tended to take on the character of commodities to be consumed."¹⁶⁵ Nothing perhaps symbolises the change better than Yomota's account of how Shûji Terayama's *Pastoral to Die in the Country* (1974), the last truly experimental work produced by ATG, found itself replaced by the French softcore blockbuster *Emmanuelle*, after a short loss-making run. A disillusioned Kinshirô Kuzui swiftly vacated his post, and though ATG would continue to act as a producer, promoter and distributor well into the next decade, the type of films it would involve itself in from now would be slightly more orthodox. Sex and politics in cinema had come full circle from its starting point circa *Night and Fog in Japan*. There was little more to be said on either front for the moment.

Everyone accepted that it was time to move on, although for Masao Adachi the move was considerably more dramatic than most. In early works like *Sain*, Adachi addressed contemporary issues in a cryptic,

allegorical manner removed from their political reality. In his pink films *Sex Play* and *High School Girl Guerrilla*, he depicted young revolutionaries whose principles and ideological aspirations cut them off from normal society. In his scripts for *Sex Jack* and *Ecstasy of the Angels* he demonstrated the dangers inherent when ideals pushed the individual not only outside of the law, but also outside all norms of human behaviour.

And yet Adachi was fully aware of this streak of romanticism in himself, the same streak which had led him to pick up a movie camera in the first place. This same desire to create a revolution both on film and in reality led him back to Beirut in 1974. In a 2006 interview with Professor Harry Harootunian, Professor of History and East Asian Studies at New York University, he talked about his own evolution as a filmmaker:

Adachi: "My interest in art and politics, or what we might call the relationship between culture or media and politics, my interest in that relation itself was quickly escalating. From that point, I moved toward the theory of landscape, and from theory of landscape to newsreel-films, and finally reached a point where I was trying to make my own low budget diary-like films... While trying to grasp the relations within my own conditions, I continued in a process of disintegration to the point of destruction. It was at that point that I became a guerrilla."

Harootunian: "But being a guerrilla in this instance means leaving the world of the imagination for acting on it, doesn't it."

*Adachi: "Yes, but at the same time I would say I am very much a romanticist. As a very basic standpoint, I went on to make another new film and started my life in a guerrilla society with a guerrilla lifestyle. So, for me, to be a cineaste and to be a guerrilla are almost interchangeable, although people say they are confused; on the one hand a cineaste and on the other hand, a guerrilla, but no, through my body they are one and the same thing."*¹⁶⁶

When Adachi went to Lebanon in 1974, he originally only intended to stay a few months to shoot more newsreel films. Initially, he joined several Japanese leftists who were working as volunteers in Palestinian refugee camps, including Shigenobu, though as the Japanese Red Army's methods became more extreme, her group was becoming increasingly cut off from both the dwindling Red Army Faction members remaining in Japan and the Palestinians themselves. He soon found himself invited directly by the PFLP to assist in establishing a functioning film studio and propaganda section, and so decided to stay in the country a while longer – a full twenty-six years further in fact.

Adachi never actually made any films for his new employers. In truth, the Palestinians had never really

cared for *Declaration of World War* anyway. What, after all, was their need for a call to arms when they were immersed in the struggle on a day-to-day basis? And of course, there was little call for the type of films Adachi made while at Wakamatsu Pro. Still, as well as being active in the role of organisation and promotion in the new film unit, he also became involved in the Palestine Writer's Union. Concurrent with these activities, Adachi started filming newsreel-cum-diary footage to record his everyday environment and existence, which was to get a lot whole more dangerous and exciting when, in 1975, Lebanon found itself divided by a massive civil war that lasted a full and bloody fifteen years. Adachi's allies among the Palestinians who had taken refuge in the south of Lebanon found themselves locking horns violently with the Israel-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA), and the filmmaking radical more often than not found himself with a gun in his hand instead of a movie camera. Adachi's exact activities over the following years in which he stayed in the Middle East should provide plenty of scope for further research in the English language, but from the perspective of this book, it is suffice to say that during this period of over a quarter of a century, he completed no further films.¹⁶⁷ Tragically, the footage he did shoot in Lebanon and Palestine was destroyed during the Israeli invasion in 1982.

When Adachi went off to follow his dreams of revolution and adventure, he rather left Wakamatsu to face the music. In the wake of the events of the first half of 1972, Wakamatsu found his company under increased observation from the police, and he initially dropped the more contentious political aspects from his work to make more conventional pink films, like *Confidential High Schoolgirl: Part-Time Ecstasy Work*, before taking the decision to weather the storm by temporarily closing down production for several years. During this time, he made a number of more straightforward pink films for Shintocho, most of which are rather difficult to see, but whose titles suggest a slightly more vicious approach than the norm: *Hundred Year Torture Chronicle* (1975), *Pornographic Casebook: Sexual Darkness* (1975), *Women Cruelty Dark History* (1976), and *Thirteen Serial Assaults* (1978). He also acted as producer for a number of similarly sadistic-themed pink films directed by a man named Banmei Takahashi, including *Japanese Torture* (1978). Takahashi, who wrote a number of scripts for Wakamatsu at this time, proved to be perhaps a little too zealous in the rope, rape and torture stakes, though did redeem himself to some extent with what many consider to be his masterpiece, the ATG co-production *TATTOO* (1982), as well as his own later take on the Asama Mountain Lodge/United Red Army incident, entitled *Rain of Light* (2001).

With his works for Shintocho, Wakamatsu effectively marked time by mounting a number of far more ambitious international co-productions for which he played producer, but we'll encounter these a little later. He also rekindled his relationship with ATG, directing *Eros Eterna* in 1977 from a script by Mamoru Sasaki, the former Sôzôsha member who, along with Masao Matsuda, helped Adachi come up with landscape theory. Wakamatsu Pro started up production again with *A Pool Without Water* (*Mizu no nai pûru*) in 1982, starring the gnarly rock-'n'-roller-turned-actor Yûya Uchida, who'd just previously appeared in Wakamatsu's *Prey* (1979), an early production by Kan Mukai's Shishi Pro company, but distributed by Toei.

In effect, with these films Wakamatsu left the world of the pink film behind him for good. His subsequent work would aim for a more widespread mainstream audience, though with varying degrees of success. *Ready to Shoot* (1990) was based partially on Wakamatsu's own experiences, featuring Yoshio Harada as a Shinjuku bar owner whose past comes back to haunt him when a beautiful Vietnamese refugee calls upon him and his student radical friends from the '60s for help as she is hunted by both the yakuza and the police. *Erotic Liaisons* (1992), contrary to its title, was neither particularly erotic nor connected in any way to the 18th Century writer Choderlos de Laclos' *Les liaisons dangereuses*. It was actually based on a work by another Frenchman, Jean-Pierre Angremy (writing under the pseudonym Raymond Marlot), and was set in Paris, with Uchida joined by a surprisingly high profile cast including Takeshi 'Beat' Kitano and actress/model Rie Miyazawa, then at her zenith in the public's affections. *Endless Waltz* (1995) recounted the mutually destructive love affair between jazz saxophonist Kaoru Abe and his wife, the writer Izumi Suzuki, both personal friends of Wakamatsu (Abe's disconcerting music accompanied *Thirteen Serial Assaults*). A Shochiku production, it led to a small cameo appearance, along with Kinji Fukasaku and a host of other big names, in a celebrity party scene in the company's bombastic celebration of the life and works of mystery-horror writer Edogawa Rampo, *The Mystery of Rampo* (1995).

But there was something missing from these later works that suggested that much of the more anarchic edge associated with the name Kôji Wakamatsu might best be attributed to Adachi. The two men were soon to be reunited however, if not as filmmaking partners, then at least as friends. In 1997, Adachi was arrested in Lebanon for a forged passport offence, along with four other Red Army members; Haruo Wakô,¹⁶⁸ Mariko Yamamoto and Kazuo Tohira, and last but not least, Kôzô Okamoto. Okamoto had been released from Israeli custody in 1985 as part of a prisoner exchange plan, though was forced to remain in the Middle East



so as not to face trial in Japan for his part in the Lod Massacre. After serving out a three-year term at the prison in Roumieh on the outskirts of Beirut, during which time Adachi converted to Christianity in order to marry a Palestinian Christian, the Red Army members were deported back to Japan to face charges. Only one person remained; Okamoto was granted political asylum because he had allegedly suffered from torture and ill-treatment during his imprisonment in Israel. All of the Japanese Red Army members received a great deal of public sympathy from the Lebanese due to their assistance in the struggle against Israel.

Adachi, now aged 60, returned to Japan and was put on trial in April 2000, though the only charge against him that stuck was an attempt to enter Czechoslovakia illegally in September 1989, using immigration documents signed under a false name: after all, there is nothing illegal in itself about being a member of the Japanese Red Army. In November the same year, Fusako Shigenobu was arrested in Osaka, even though it was believed that she was still in hiding somewhere in the Middle East. Following her arrest, police raided a large number of Red Army sympathisers, including the offices of Wakamatsu Pro. She was finally sentenced, in February 2006, to a twenty-year prison sentence for her part in the 1974 attack on the French Embassy in The Hague. Prior to her sentencing, she announced that the Japanese Red Army had disbanded.

Adachi was released from prison in 2003, after serving out his sentence, and set out to start afresh; in life, with his first child born in July 2005, and in filmmaking, as he managed to get together the funds to direct his first film in over three-and-a-half decades. *Prisoner (Terrorist)*, released in 2007, is based on the true story of none other than his erstwhile cellmate in Beirut, Kôzô Okamoto.

Footnotes

¹³⁷ Domenig, Roland. "A History of Sex Education Films in Japan – Part 2: The Post-War Years and the Basukon Eiga". www.midnighteye.com/features/a-history-of-sex-education-films-in-japan-part-2.shtml.

¹³⁸ Desser, David. *Eros Plus Massacre*. pg 107.

¹³⁹ Schönherr, Johannes. "Masao Adachi: Portrait of a Radical in Cinema and Politics".

¹⁴⁰ The characters *jôshi* in the title refer to the 'love suicide' pacts that have been romanticized in much Japanese traditional fiction.

¹⁴¹ Footnotes from Harootunian, Harry, Hirasawa, Gô and Kôso, Saburô. "Cinema / Revolution: An Interview Masao Adachi" in *boundary 2*, Fall 2008. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

¹⁴² The original Japanese title, *Hadaka no jûkyûsai*, translates as "Naked 19-year-old".

¹⁴³ Yomota, Inuhiko. "Here and There: Yomota Inuhiko Traces the Life Course of a Most Radical Filmmaking Figure". *Look Japan*, May 2001. pg 19-21.

¹⁴⁴ See Nornes, Abé Mark, *Forest of Pressure: Ogawa Shinsuke and Postwar Japanese Documentary* for more information about this extraordinary series of films.

¹⁴⁵ See Hane, Mikiso. *Modern Japan: A Historical Survey* pg 456 for an overview of the Zengakuren protests. The individual incidents are covered in more detail in Farrell, William R. *Blood and Rage: The Story of the Japanese Red Army*.

¹⁴⁶ Koji Wakamatsu par Koji Wakamatsu. Program notes for *Sex Jack* from the 1998 *L'Étrange Festival* in Paris. www.etrangefestival.com/index_old/Prog98Wakamatsu.html.

¹⁴⁷ Farrell. pg vii.

¹⁴⁸ Ianni, Dimitri. Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Paolo Bertolin's article and interview with the director "Japanese Director Looks at Comfort Women" appeared in the *Korea Times* on 26 December, 2005.

¹⁵⁰ Robinson, David. *Financial Times*. 21 May, 1971.

¹⁵¹ Niogret, Hubert. *Dernières nouvelles du cinéma japonais*. Positif 130. Sept 1971 pg 48. Author's translation. "Défenseur de l'action des gauchistes japonais et de l'amour-révolte, Koji Wakamatsu semble plutôt être un cinéaste opportuniste, déguisé en gauchiste, qui se complaît dans des rêves pseudo-révolutionnaires à partir du moment où ils se transforment en machines à sous. Que Nagisa Oshima voie dans ces films une désobéissance envers l'autorité, et la défense d'actes de "terrorisme et de destruction individuelle" c'est peut-être accorder trop de valeur à un cinéaste comme Koji Wakamatsu, mais c'est, pour Oshima, retrouver chez Wakamatsu un élément qui est au couer de *Il est mort après la guerre*, c'est-à-dire le problème des mouvements gauchistes qui prennent conscience d'une étape nouvelle et ressentent la nécessité de renforcer le combat contre le pouvoir"

¹⁵² Ianni, Dimitri. Ibid.

¹⁵³ Minokomi 70, pg 65.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ "Cinema / Revolution: An Interview Masao Adachi" by Harootunian, Hirasawa and Kôso. Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ See the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival catalogue 2003, pg 81-93. Also Nornes, Abé Mark, *Forest of Pressure: Ogawa Shinsuke and Postwar Japanese Documentary* pg 86-90.

¹⁵⁸ This is according to Adachi in Harootunian and Kôso's interview from 2006, though Wakamatsu says as much himself in *Minikomi* 70. pg 60.

¹⁵⁹ *Minikomi* 70. pg 66.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. pg 67.

¹⁶¹ Even more so in the US DVD release by Image Entertainment, where two of the reels in the mid-section have been transferred out of order.

¹⁶² In his article for *Film International*, "Masao Adachi: Portrait of a Radical in Cinema and Politics", Schönherr suggests this fictional organisation is modelled on the Société des Saisons, headed by Louis Auguste Blanqui (1805-81), an infamous French left-wing revolutionary who promoted the toppling of the government which led to the Paris Commune of 1871.

¹⁶³ See Gô Hirasawa's interview with Adachi, which originally appeared in Adachi's book *Eiga / Kakumei*, though is reproduced in English in the ATG Viennale 2003 catalogue, pg 144-46.

¹⁶⁴ *Néojaponisme*. <http://neojaponisme.com/2007/09/13/steinhoff-partfour>. (updated 13 September, 2007). Steinhoff has published several books on the Red Army, but so far these have only been published in Japanese. See bibliography for further details.

¹⁶⁵ Yomota, Inuhiko. "Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'ATG. Art Theatre Guild". Viennale 2003 catalogue. pg 34.

¹⁶⁶ Harootunian and Kôso. Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ See Schönherr, Johannes, for an English-language overview. In Japanese see Hirasawa's interviews with Adachi in the book *Eiga/Kakumei*.

¹⁶⁸ Wakô started out working at the ticket office of the Shinjuku Bunka cinema before becoming an assistant director at Wakamatsu Pro. He played one of the revolutionaries of the October Group in *Ecstasy of the Angels*, and is currently facing a very long prison sentence for taking part in JRA terrorist attacks in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. I am indebted to Roland Domenig for this information.

The Golden Dawn of the New Porn: Nikkatsu's Roman Porno

By the latter half of the '60s, most of the majors had spotted the commercial potential of films that exploited female nudity and dealt with adult themes. For the next decade or so, sex came to the fore at virtually every level of Japanese cinema. The company that led the way, and the only one of the majors to place pretty much all of its eggs in one basket, was Nikkatsu. On 20 November, 1971, it famously launched its new Roman Porno (*roman poruno*) line with the double bill of Isao Hayashi's *Castle Orgies* (aka *Sensual History: Shogun's Harem Secret Story*) and Shôgorô Nishimura's *Apartment Wife: Afternoon Affair*.

The following seventeen-year period saw a grand total of around 850 titles released under this new brand name before the series came to an end in 1988. The bulk of these, a total of around 710 films, were made in-house by Nikkatsu, with the rest produced under contract by a number of independent pink companies including Shishi Pro and ENK, which meant that one of the three films playing on the triple bills in the Nikkatsu-operated adult theatres would have been made outside of Nikkatsu.¹⁶⁹

It is often claimed that the label is a contraction of the words 'Romantic Pornography'. A more convincing explanation is that it was derived from the French term *roman pornographique*, or 'pornographic novel', used to describe erotic fictional works ranging from the writings of the Marquis de Sade to Pauline Réage's *The Story of O* (*L'histoire d'O*, 1954) and Anaïs Nin's *Delta of Venus* (1969). This association with the world of European literature, albeit its more carnal side, was intended to lend Nikkatsu's adult output a more highbrow cachet compared with its less reputable rivals in the *eroduction* world. What Nikkatsu essentially did was to dramatically bring sexual subject matter out from the underground, dust it down and repackage it for a wider audience.

The early Roman Porno films certainly captured the attention of the general public, as well as that of critics from reputable publications like *Kinema Junpô*, who placed several of the titles in their annual Best Ten rankings. They also, somewhat less auspiciously, caught the eye of the Tokyo Metropolitan Police who, in 1972, seized prints of Seiichirô Yamaguchi's *Love Hunter* alongside the films with which it was playing (Katsuhiko Fujii's *Office Lady Diary: Scent of a She-Cat*, and Kaoru Umezawa's pink movie *Highschool Geisha*) and arrested its director and several Nikkatsu staff members for violating Article 175 of the penal code. It was the second case of its kind, following the similar brouhaha surrounding *Black Snow*, which Nikkatsu had been

responsible for distributing in 1965, but more significantly in this case, several inspectors for Eirin were seen as complicit in letting such explicit material slip through the net, and were also indicted. While they were all awaiting trial, Yamaguchi made *Love Hunter: Desire* in 1973, which rather undiplomatically featured a student working evenings as a stripper arrested on exactly this same charge of 'public obscenity'. The film merely added further fuel to the prosecution's fire, and proved that step too far for the company, who quickly dispensed with Yamaguchi's services. The Nikkatsu Roman Porno trials ran from 1975 to 1980, when a 'not guilty' verdict was finally returned, thus more or less validating the exploitation of sex in mainstream cinema. Yamaguchi's part in the story, however, had come to an end. He made only one more film in his career, *Kitamura Tôkoku: Our Song of Winter*, for ATG in 1977.

The police prosecution of *Love Hunter* could be regarded as a warning for the studio and the industry at large not to go too far, but with the wheels of justice moving as slowly as they do in Japan, by the time the case finally reached court it was far too late to turn back the tide. Nikkatsu had already released two hundred similar Roman Porno titles, and the other studios had, to a lesser but still not insignificant extent, followed its lead. The Pinky Violence range produced by rival company Toei, with its repertoire of all-girl lynch mobs, insatiable Shoguns and wicked nuns, never took over the production rosters in quite the same way that Roman Porno did at Nikkatsu. The erotic films the company did produce – most notably *Zero Woman: Red Handcuffs* (1974) starring Miki Sugimoto, the *Female Convict Scorpion* series (1972-73) starring Meiko Kaji¹⁷⁰ and the



above: The sex film goes upmarket: *Tattooed Flower Vase* (1976), a representative Roman Porno directed by Masaru Konuma. ©Nikkatsu Corporation



above: The high school was the inevitable setting for many a Roman Porno title, with Yukihiko Kondô's *High School Girl Report: Yûko's White Breasts* (1971) counting as one of the earliest entries in Nikkatsu's new line. ©Nikkatsu Corporation

many titles directed by Norifumi Suzuki, including *Hot Spring Snapping Turtle Geisha* (1972), *The Erotic Shogun and His Twenty-One Prostitutes* (1972), *Sex and Fury* (1973) and *Terrifying Girls' High School: Lynch Law Classroom* (1973) – may have been bigger, bolder and more lavishly mounted, but the nude scenes were usually briefer, milder and of a more vicious than sensuous nature. These were films in which sex was just a part of the exploitation, never quite the whole deal.

Toei was also the studio where Teruo Ishii embarked on his celebrated exemplars of what has been termed 'Asian Extreme Cinema', with *Shogun's Joy of Torture* (1968), an omnibus of three Edo-period short stories that all culminate in ferocious scenes of punishment. The series parallels the increasing excesses of such European contemporaries as Michael Reeves's *Witchfinder General* (1968), Michael Armstrong's *Mark of the Devil* (1970) and Jess Franco's *The Bloody Judge* (1969), in historically-inspired offerings that include: *Tokugawa Tattoo Expert: Torture Hell* (1969); *Meiji Era, Taisho Era, Showa Era: Bizarre Woman Crime History* (1969); and *Porno Period Drama: Bôhachi Code of Honour* (1973). One such sex-and-sadism spectacle directed by Ishii however, *Yakuza Punishment History: Lynching* (1969), in three self-contained episodes set over

different time periods, focuses on punishments meted out on male gangsters for violating the yakuza code, suggesting that their violent appeal was not solely due to the spectacle of exclusively female bodies being battered, broken and bound.

In the early '70s, Toei also released a number of prurient 'shockumentaries' of about an hour in length as part of its *Sex Document* series. Yukio Noda's *Sex Document: Blonde Call-Girls* (1973) is a faked exposé on the phenomenon of Western sex workers lured to the Land of the Rising Yen. Choicely-edited footage shows single Japanese men doling out ten-thousand-yen notes before bedding their blonde booty, followed by the fair-skinned hookers shopping for expensive jewellery as an off-screen narrator proudly informs us how these women have been lured by Japan's new economic prosperity. Meanwhile, an interviewer questions a series of GIs at ease on a beach, and a group of Western girls frequenting a *gaijin* bar, with a series of superficial questions about foreigners' liberal attitudes to sex. By the time we get round to the psychedelic 'free love' session at the film's coda, it becomes clear that the appeal is as much to do with the lure of forbidden fruit as it is a bit of ego-bolstering for Japanese males. Shin Takakuwa's *Sex Document: Motel Queens* (1973) provides a light-hearted, retro-tinted peep into the world of the Love Hotel, those kitschily-furnished urban oases where couples can grab a few moments of privacy. The film unfolds as a series of skits, periodically interspersed with guided tours around the various establishments by two cat-suited cuties, all set to a running commentary provided by a male and female pair of off-screen narrators: a salaryman squeezes in a session with a melon-breasted office associate during his lunch break; a lesbian couple sneak onto the premises with one of them disguised as a man; a young virgin consults his 'How To Sex' manual before pitching himself into the fray; and a truck driver finds himself the object of a survey into Japanese sex habits when he picks up a foreign hitchhiker. Other curios in the *Sex Document* series are Sadao Nakajima's *World of Sex Perverts* (1971) and *Queens of Eros* (1973), and Ryûichi Takamori's *Soapland Queens* (1972).

Even the typically more wholesome Shochiku got in on the act. At the time, the company had boasted the most popular film franchise of the era in the form of Yôji Yamada's *It's Tough Being a Man* series, which began in 1969 and featured the much-loved itinerant peddler known as Tora-san, who roamed from town to town through film after film causing mischief and glee in equal measure, until the death of its star Kiyoshi Atsumi in 1996 brought an end to its forty eight instalment run. However, there was another side to Shochiku that is not so well remembered, and indeed one the company itself did its utmost to keep hidden. During the early '70s, Shochiku established a subsidiary that combined the scale of Toei's films with the erotic aspirations of Nikkatsu's and, borrowing the *kanji* characters from each

of its two competitors' names, called itself, rather unimaginatively, Tōkatsu. One of the few Tōkatsu films available on DVD in Japan highlights the aspirations of the line beautifully. *L'ambition dans le miroir* (1972) sported a 96-minute running time, a diversity of locations, and a lead cast whose names would generally not be associated with this kind of material. The lead role is taken by the simian-looking Ichirō Araki, a popular musician of the time who, as well as scoring numerous films over the decades also penned several Roman Porno scripts, including Chūsei Sone's *Virgin Courtesan*. He plays a roguish chancer who brazenly works his way through a group of holidaying beauty workers he first encounters at a hot spring resort. The trail of bedded beauticians leads all the way up to the Hepburn-esque leading lady Yuriko Hishimi (an actress who spent much of the decade in large-screen roles for Toei) via a colourful dream sequence in which he is whipped by a pair of pendulous blondes on a work placement from a Parisian beauty school. By this time however, he has blackmailed his way into a managerial role at a company selling a revolutionary new brand of hairspray. *L'ambition dans le miroir* was one the first of many titles Satoru Kobayashi made for Tōkatsu, and probably represents the largest project the *Flesh Market* director ever helmed (a young Banmei Takahashi, who we'll encounter more fully soon, was his assistant director). Kobayashi made dozens of films for this company – particularly in the later part of the decade, when it upped its production – with titles such as *Pervert's Pitfall* (1976), *The High School Girl Who Likes to Be Watched* (1976), *Peeping Assault* (1977), and *Looking from Below* (1981), though his directorial credits at Tōkatsu end in 1983. Judging by his increasing output and the adoption of more outrageous titles along the lines of those associated with the standard pink film scene, one can assume that by this stage Tōkatsu had ceased all attempts to distinguish itself with lavish projects such as his first picture for them.

So what motivated this explosion in sexual activity in Japanese cinema? In many respects, the situation was hardly unique compared with that of other countries, as is clearly demonstrated by looking at the daily bulletins published throughout the Cannes film festival in the year of Roman Porno's birth – the very same year that Nagisa Ōshima arrived at the festival with Kōji Wakamatsu and Masao Adachi in tow. In what now, looking back, seems something of a vintage year for world cinema, a year in which Joseph Losey's *The Go-Between* picked up the Palme d'Or and played alongside monumental works like Luchino Visconti's *Death in Venice*, Nicolas Roeg's *Walkabout*, Peter Watkins's *Punishment Park* and Alejandro Jodorowsky's *El Topo*, the film that picked up the most press attention was Yugoslavian director Dusan Makavejev's combination of porn and politics, *W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism* (*W.R. – Misterije organizma*), with its groundbreaking scene of an erect penis being cast in plaster. The pages of the *Journal*

du Show Business festival daily were peppered liberally with ads for European sex films with titles like *The Lustful Vicar*, and Britain's contribution to the film market included *Games That Lovers Play* (starring a youthful Joanna Lumley), *Permissive, Sweet and Sexy*, and *Take Some Girls*. Dilys Powell's report on the festival for the UK's *Sunday Times* perfectly reflected the changing tide: "But perhaps, I felt after forcing myself to sit through this extravagance [*Panic in Needle Park*], I am lagging behind the times; perhaps I ought to explore further. There is a film called 'Satan Skin' [sic]; ought I to be seeing that? or 'Sex Jack'? or 'Africa Erotica,' advertised by a drawing implying that a girl is about to be raped by a large ape? What about 'Private Party, the Life of a Danish Porno Girl'? or a Swedish film entitled, no doubt veraciously, 'Exposed'?"¹⁷¹

While in many people's eyes nowadays the name Nikkatsu is almost synonymous with the Japanese sex film, in actual fact, Japan's oldest movie company had played a major role in the nation's cinematic history, fading in and out of prominence at different points in time since the day that it was founded. It was originally conceived as the Dai-Nihon Fuirumu Kikai Seizō Kaisha (Greater Japan Film Machinery Manufacturing Company) through the merger of four separate parties in 1909, with the aim of combining their interests to monopolise the new film industry. This trust was formed in direct imitation of the Thomas Edison-led Motion Picture Patents company (which had been established in the US in December 1908). In 1912, it changed its name to Nippon Katsudō Shashin Kaisha (literally, the Japan Cinematograph Company), which in turn was shortened to Nikkatsu. Unlike its American role model, Nikkatsu had no links with the manufacturers of cameras or projectors, so was unable to gain the same degree of monopoly over the rapidly industrialising film market as Edison's trust had (until it was broken up in 1915, having been viewed by the US government as a monopoly in restraint of trade). It did, however, have four studios – three in Tokyo and one in Kyoto – and seventy theatres spread nationwide at its disposal, and soon dominated the early film market with its highly-popular *chambara* movies, and melodramas derived from the *Shinpa* stage,¹⁷² holding its own against emerging rivals such as Shochiku. Crucial figures in the country's film history who were nurtured at the studio include: Shōzō Makino, the man hailed as Japan's first true film director; Daisuke Itō, whose innovative editing techniques in works like *Chūji's Travel Diary* (1927) pioneered the early *jidai-geki*; Kenji Mizoguchi; and Tomu Uchida.¹⁷³

But fifty years on from such illustrious beginnings and the company's fortunes were severely flagging, in no small part due to the impact of television. Nikkatsu managed to hold its own better than some. Daiei barely limped into the next decade as, following Shinto's lead ten years before, in November 1971 it became the second of the majors to file for bankruptcy.



above: Prior to the commencement of Roman Porno, Nikkatsu introduced more adult themes in films like Shôgorô Nishimura's stylish *Cruel Female Love Suicide* (1970), a lesbian-themed drama featuring Annu Mari, the half-Indian starlet of *Branded to Kill*, and Sanae Ôhori. ©Nikkatsu Corporation

opposite: More scenes from *Cruel Female Love Suicide* (1970), one of a number of precursors to the Roman Porno line. ©Nikkatsu Corporation

Daiei's collapse was something of a wake-up call for Nikkatsu's management. The two companies had banded together in June 1970 to launch the short-lived *Dainichi Eihai* (Dainichi Film Distribution) to share their joint distribution costs. In fact, the two companies had always been closely linked. Daiei really owed its entire existence to the older company: it was originally established in 1942, during a mammoth restructuring of the ten major film companies then active, as the industry came under the tightened grip of the wartime government's control. Daiei was created after Nikkatsu merged its production facilities with the companies Shinkô Kinema and Daito Eiga, leaving Nikkatsu itself to function separately, purely in the capacity of theatrical exhibitors. Though remaining absent from production until 1954, Nikkatsu made a huge amount of money immediately after the war through the exhibition of foreign films, particularly those from Hollywood, while Daiei continued production, though it suffered against the competition through the lack of its own theatre chain.

It was the huge success, in 1956, of the *taiyôzoku* movies *Season of the Sun* and *Crazed Fruit* that provided the impetus for Nikkatsu's direction over the course of the next decade, but this trend had begun to lose its sparkle by the end of the '60s. Crisis point was reached with the celebrated sacking of the director Seijun Suzuki by company president Kyûsaku Hori, after Suzuki turned in the pop-art gangster movie *Branded to Kill* (1967), a film which Hori labelled "incomprehensible", and which barely skimmed on the nudity of its lead actresses.

Many of Nikkatsu's permanent employees left the company in protest over Suzuki's unfair dismissal, believing he was something of a scapegoat for the company's ailing fortunes. If these figures hadn't jumped many would have probably been pushed anyway, as was the case with Nikkatsu's repertory of screen idols – including Akira Kobayashi, Hideki Takahashi and Tetsuya

Watari – once their box-office draw began to wane. The company was on its last legs following the pre-emptive departure, in 1968, of Yûjirô Ishihara, its most profitable asset, to start up his own independent company. Toshio Masuda, who had directed Ishihara in many of his most successful outings, departed with him, going on to helm, along with Kinji Fukasaku, the Japanese sections of Richard Fleischer's *Tora! Tora! Tora!* (1970), and later briefly moving into anime with the theatrical version of Leiji Matsumoto's *Space Battleship Yamato* in 1974. The box-office flop of Shôhei Imamura's ambitious exploration of the genesis of the Japanese people, *Profound Desire of the Gods*, in 1969 also seriously left its mark on the company.

Drastic measures were called for. The only companies who seemed to be making money were those in the *eroduction* business, and it is no coincidence that around this time pink films were being distributed in their own dedicated theatres, rather than sharing triple bill programs with the work of the major studios. To bolster their populist lines of giant monster movies and *chambara* serials, Daiei had attempted to move in on the adult market, though the rather tame offerings that formed the Daiei Erotics series, including works by Yasuzô Masumura such as *A Wet Couple* (1968) and *Vixen* (1969), and Akira Inoue's *Secret Report from a Woman's Prison* (1967), proved too little too late to save it from insolvency. But Nikkatsu's initial dabbling in the field of erotic-themed movies soon led to a wholesale about-turn in company policy following the success of titles like Tan Iida's *Tokyo Bath Harem* (1968) and his three *Night Frontline* films – beginning with *Woman Hunting* (1969) – as well as Shôgorô Nishimura's *Cruel Female Love Suicide* (1970), a stylish monochrome drama which saw a mini-skirted Annu Mari, the half-Indian beauty of *Branded to Kill*, embroiled in the bizarre rituals of a secret sex cult, and engaged in a lesbian love affair that ends with her and her lover's immolation. And so in the same month that Daiei went under, the Roman Porno line was launched.

Roman Porno's phenomenal conveyor-belt level of output didn't, in reality, represent that much of a change in the studio's practices. While the three other surviving companies, Shochiku, Toho and Toei, drastically cut down on production to focus on exhibition while expanding their interests in other fields outside of cinema, such as real estate and other aspects of the entertainment industry, the marketing and production methods used by Nikkatsu were not so far removed from those of the previous decade, when the company's output of youth-oriented, Western-inspired pictures had constantly yielded around 5-10 titles a month.

In the same vein, popular Roman Porno titles were often spun out into long-running serials, often linked by nothing more than a name and a basic scenario. The first Roman Porno, *Apartment Wife: Afternoon Affair*, launched a series that eventually stretched to over 20 films, and also became a staple scenario for the pink film, notably

in the series of titles directed by Toshiki Satô in the '90s. Other lines included: the *Office Lady Diary* films; the SM-dominated *Flower and Snake* titles (beginning with Masaru Konuma's film of the same name in 1974 and later resurfacing in the mid-'80s); Yukihiro Kondô's *High School Girl Report* diptych of *Yûko's White Breasts* and *Blooming Flower Yûko* (both 1971), which as their titles spell out, make much of the youthful presence of actress Yûko Katagiri; and the *Female Teacher* films, kicked off by Masaru Konuma's *Delicious Life* in 1973.

The range of styles and sub-genres to be found within Roman Porno was wide and diverse. Alongside the numerous period dramas set in exotic milieus like the Shogun's harem during the Edo period, or scenarios revolving around more commonplace modern-day fantasy figures like nubile high school girls, nurses, and Office Ladies, there was the occasional thriller like the Argento-esque *Female Cat* (1982), directed by the actor Shingo Yamashiro and featuring Ai Saotome as a glamorous doctor with a hidden past who is thrown into danger when she is invited by a transvestite patient to a private party held at his house. Taking its name from Japan's famous all-woman theatrical troupe, Kôyû Ohara's musical comedy *Oh! Takarazuka* (1982) created an entire island populated only by women. There were localised riffs on famous European softcore titles, like *Tokyo Emmanuelle* (1975), and occasionally dramatic inspiration came from foreign literary sources, like Katsuhiko Fujii's *Lady Chatterley in Tokyo* (1977), Toshiya Fujita's re-envisioning of Choderlos de Laclos's tale of sexual



machinations and double bluffs in *Dangerous Liaisons* (1978), or Tatsumi Kumashiro's relocation of the Marquis de Sade's philosophising in the boudoir to a remote forest cottage, in *Woman Hell: Woods Are Wet* (1973). Akio Jissôji also tackled de Sade in a film released only a few months after the Roman Porno series was discontinued, entitled *The Prosperity of Vice* (1988). Kumashiro turned to novels closer to home, making films that included a 1974 version of Junichirô Tanizaki's *The Key*, about a middle-aged couple who take to spicing up their jaded marital life by playing dark psychological games involving the wife leaving her diary, replete with secret fantasies and details of adulterous liaisons, in conspicuous places for her husband to see, while he takes to doping her and taking covert snapshots of her lying naked on the sheets. This Nikkatsu version was one of many adaptations of Tanizaki's tale, which include: Kon Ichikawa's *Odd Obsession* (1959) for Daiei; a Wakamatsu-produced version directed by Akitaka Kimata in 1983; Italian director Tinto Brass's version, *La chiave*, from the same year, and Toshiharu Ikeda's 1997 version for Toei. Nikkatsu even took to remaking its earlier successes in Roman Porno versions, including *Gate of Flesh* (which which was reworked with a minimum of changes in 1977 by Shôgorô Nishimura), and a new 1981 version of Shintarô Ishihara's incendiary *taiyôzoku* novel *Crazed Fruit*, made by Kichitarô Negishi in 1981.

Though its move to Roman Porno was a major, sweeping change of direction, it should be pointed out that in its first decade of Roman Porno production, Nikkatsu did not exclusively devote its resources to the genre. In 1978, it remade Sôgo Ishii's self-produced 8mm short work *Panic in High School* as a feature, with Yukihiro Sawada co-directing. Prior to that there were directors who, for a short while, more or less continued where they had left off from before the switch. Toshiya Fujita and Yasuharu Hasebe had directed the various entries in the five-episode girl gang *Stray Cat Rock* series, released during 1970-71 and starring Meiko Kaji. Hasebe followed it up with the not-dissimilar *Warring States Rock: Gale-Force Women* (1972), though afterwards he left the studio for a short period to work in television, only to return with his controversial collection of rape-themed exploitationers, which we'll look at in more detail in a later chapter.

Fujita managed a more successful compromise. During the late '60s, he had made a handful of titles, of which the most significant is *Nippon Year Zero* (1968), the legendary 'lost' film co-directed with Kazuo Kawabe. The film's run was halted after three days, and it was not to screen again for a further thirty years. Its multi-threaded narrative featured documentary footage shot by Kawabe, focused on a new recruit in the Self Defence Force and a counter-cultural dropout, combined with dramatic scripted scenes, shot by Fujita, of a student activist whose father is a survivor of the Hiroshima atomic blast.¹⁷⁴ Fujita's popular hit movie, *Wet Sand of*

August (1971), a nostalgic rite-of-passage throwback to the *taiyôzoku* days – written by Atsushi Yamatoya and featuring beach parties, beatniks, babes in bikinis, and biker gangs – was released three months before Roman Porno's inauguration. Its successors, *August Is the Smell of Eros* (1972) and *Sweet Smell of Eros* (1973), though released as part of the Roman Porno line, followed on in a similar vein, sporting the odd nude scene but never reliant upon it. Fujita also made several non-adult films at Nikkatsu, including *My Sister* (1974), *Red Lantern* (1974), and *Eighteen-Year-Old, to the Sea* (1978), although his best known works as far as foreign viewers are concerned came during a brief spell away from the studio when he rejoined actress Meiko Kaji to make *Lady Snowblood* (1973) and *Lady Snowblood: Love Song of Vengeance* (1974). Produced by an independent company named Tokyo Eiga, and distributed by Toho, the two films were adapted from Kazuo Koike and Kazuo Kamimura's seminal manga series. Much later in his career, incidentally, Fujita turned to acting: among several appearances in mainstream films, he starred in one pink title, *Wet Hot Saké* (1996), directed by Yôichi Nishiyama for Shintocho.

Like Fujita's films, Tôru Murakawa's debut with *Playful White Fingers* (1972), starring Hiroko Isayama as a footloose young pickpocket was, despite being marketed as Roman Porno, looked upon by critics as belonging more comfortably within the youth movie genre. It was hailed as the tenth best film of its year by *Kinema Junpô* magazine. Murakawa made only two more works for the studio, both of which were released within the same year; *Sensual Zone: Sorrowful Pimp* and *Circuit of Sorrow*. He then moved on, evidently feeling his talents were better served elsewhere. Most of his subsequent work was of a distinctly non-erotic nature, with a number of titles starring the iconic Yûsaku Matsuda, such as *Resurrection of the Golden Wolf* (1979), for Kadokawa, the publishing giant who dominated the industry from the late-'70s onwards through their commitment to producing Hollywood-styled blockbusters.

Nikkatsu's Roman Porno movies have often been described as belonging to the pink genre, and at first glance, one can see why. If one just considers the pink genre as an umbrella definition for 'sex films', then indeed, the cap does seem to fit. Though slightly longer than the average pink film, which slimmed down from feature-length to just over the hour mark in the early '70s, Roman Porno still adheres to many of its conventions, including the regular appearance of a sex or a nude scene roughly every ten minutes. A more precise definition of both terms however reveals fundamental differences between them. If we define pink not solely by its adult content, but also by its points of production, distribution and exhibition, then Nikkatsu's films certainly aren't pink.

First of all, the company owned a widespread network of its own theatres across the country, meaning the films had a far greater prominence than the pink

productions. It also had its own production facilities in the form of its studios at Chôfu, just to the west of Tokyo, as well as having far higher budgets at its disposal; at an average of ¥7.5 million (approx \$75,000) per film, though considerably cheaper than most commercial features, Roman Pornos cost twice as much as a typical pink film. When the line started, one of its main selling points was its "All Colour" widescreen format. Pink films were predominantly still shot only in part colour at the time, though the arrival of Roman Porno rapidly forced the independent companies to come up to date.

Crucially, Nikkatsu had a large pool of highly proficient company-trained directors, cameramen, set designers and various other technicians at its disposal to support its production-line level of output. Like all of the major studios, its directors were cherry-picked from Japan's most prestigious universities and made to sit an entrance examination for the company. They all worked as director's assistants for an average of ten years before they were allowed to helm their own productions. This is not only reflected in the markedly higher technical virtues of Roman Porno, but also in the fact that its creators generally came from a different social milieu than those making pink films.

From the evidence of what's on screen these distinctions between pink and Roman Porno might seem arbitrary, but in its early productions at least, it seems that Nikkatsu was trying to do something very different from its low-budget rivals. While the management of Nikkatsu adopted a relatively hands-off approach with regard to what the directors actually turned in as the finished product (as long as the sex was there), the company's overall philosophy was that they were making real films around previously taboo subjects. Arguably, what Roman Porno brought to Japanese cinema was the somewhat progressive portrayal of strong female characters, powerful sexual beings in their own right and not just one-dimensional ciphers used to express anti-authoritarian sentiments or to vent one's spleen against society. The distinction is certainly not as cut and dry as suggested here, and has been put forward as something of a provocation to inspire further investigation and debate, but by all accounts it seems that Nikkatsu were quite keen to attract couples and female viewers to its cinemas, something never possible with the rowdy men-only pink theatres. Certainly, as the '70s progressed and Roman Porno lost its novelty, the delineations became ever more blurred. But the crucial point is that both the staff of the Nikkatsu Corporation and the directors who worked there during the '70s and '80s themselves regard Roman Porno as something wholly different from the pink film.

Despite all that, Roman Porno enjoyed something of a symbiotic relationship with the pink film. As Nikkatsu's movies were shown on triple bills, even with a fairly consistent output of six films a month (the average shoot was two weeks, and after a further week of post-

production the film would be playing in cinemas within the month) it was unable to fill all the slots in its exhibition schedules across the whole country, so many of the independent productions were picked up and screened alongside them to take up the slack. Even today, in the pink theatres that screen older films, like the Roman Gekijô in Tokyo's Shimbashi area, or more provincial venues further afield from the capital, viewers can encounter Roman Porno playing alongside pink films.

Roman Porno started off sensationally, but slowly lost its edge against its lower budget competitors and suffered with the emergence of the Adult Video market. Even an attempt to enter this particular marketplace with the Roman X video series was not enough. Roman Porno came to an abrupt end with the double bill of Daisuke Gotô's *Bed Partner* and Katsuji Kanazawa's *The Love Game Isn't Over*, both released on 28 May, 1988. A fortnight later came its swansong, with the release of *That's Roman Porno: Smiles of Goddesses*, a *That's Entertainment*-style compilation of clips of the company's finest moments, assembled by Takashi Kodoma, with the emphasis firmly on the starlets.

After Nikkatsu killed off Roman Porno, it quickly switched tack once more and launched the short-lived Ropponica label, which the company itself defined as, "a slightly sexy genre which was aimed at a general audience,"¹⁷⁵ releasing titles that included Tatsumi Kumashiro's erotic thriller *Love Bites Back* (1988) and Akio Jissôji's *The Prosperity of Vice* (1988).



above: *Woods Are Wet* (1973), Tatsumi Kumashiro's reworking of de Sade's dark tales, which saw their editor and translator indicted for 'public obscenity' upon their original serialization between 1959 and 1960. ©Nikkatsu Corporation

It generally slimmed down its production and started exploring other avenues, such as straight-to-video production and cable and satellite broadcasting. There were attempts at re-entering the mainstream, but after their five-billion-yen-budget 80th Anniversary spectacular of the World War II drama *The Setting Sun* (1992) – directed by the novelist Rô Tomono and featuring western actors such as Donald Sutherland and Diane Lane – bombed severely at the box office, the company filed for bankruptcy in 1993. Other adverse factors contributed to Nikkatsu's downfall too, namely the company's investments in three golf courses that were badly hit by the recession.

Nikkatsu was resurrected in 1996 after being taken over by the electronic games giant Namco. Today it continues to run its studio facilities in Chôfu, renting them out to other companies as well as using them for its own productions. Nikkatsu picked up production again in 1997 with Kei Kumai's *To Love*, though with only one or two films each year, it is working at a vastly reduced rate in comparison to previous eras. Recent noteworthy productions which the company have been involved in include Kiyoshi Kurosawa's *Charisma* (1999), Kei Kumai's *The Sea Is Watching* (2002), Ryûhei Kitamura's *Alive* (2003), and Naomi Kawase's *Shara* (2003). Alongside this, the company also runs the Cine Libre chain (with its flagship theatre in Ikebukuro in Tokyo, through which it distributes a significant number of mainstream European and Hollywood productions), and the Neco and Rainbow adult satellite channels.¹⁷⁶

But one of Nikkatsu's most significant assets today is the vast stock of classic erotic titles in its back catalogue, many of which have found a new wave of overseas aficionados thanks to the efforts of distributors such as Pagan Films, Artsmagic, Rapid Eye Movies and Image Entertainment. For almost two decades, Roman Porno simultaneously courted controversy and startled its critics, turning out some genuinely highly regarded titles before decadence set in and the line had run its course. What exactly this course was shall be examined in detail over the following chapters.

Footnotes

¹⁶⁹ These numbers are cited by Nikkatsu itself on the brochure accompanying the June 1997 Roman Porno retrospective at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA). Note the inclusion of the word 'around'.

¹⁷⁰ Followed by the two *New Female Convict Scorpion* films (1976-77), and later various spin-offs for the video market including *Sasori in the U.S.A.* (1997).

¹⁷¹ Powell, Dilys. "Sinking in the Rain". *Sunday Times*, 30/5/71. The Swedish film mentioned is no doubt Gustav Wiklund's *Exponerad*, starring Christina Lindberg, which caused something of a stir at Cannes that year.

¹⁷² *Shinpa-geki*, or New School theatre.

¹⁷³ Anderson and Richie, pg 30, gives the basic details of Nikkatsu's beginnings. For a detailed history of the studio, see Schilling, Mark. *No Borders, No Limits: Nikkatsu Action Cinema*. Surrey: FAB Press, 2007.

¹⁷⁴ See Hall, Jonathan M. review of Garrett, Stewart's *Between Film and Screen: Modernism's Photo Synthesis* (University of Chicago, 1999) in *Documentary Box 20* for more detailed description of the film's history and content.

¹⁷⁵ ICA Roman Porno retrospective notes. June 1997.

¹⁷⁶ Schilling, Mark. *No Borders, No Limits: Nikkatsu Action Cinema*. pg 27.



above: The Roman Gekijô theatre in Shimbashi, one of the best places in Tokyo to watch old Roman Porno releases on a big screen.
(picture by Jason Gray)

Roman Porno: The Films, Their Makers and Their Stars

One of the important roles the pink industry served for Nikkatsu was as a convenient recruiting ground for beautiful young girls willing to bare their wares. When the company first announced their switch to *seijin eiga*, many of the actors and actresses who had been working there under contract unsurprisingly quit in disgust. A good example familiar to Western audiences was Meiko Kaji, who had appeared as the sassy gang leader of the Alleycats in the *Stray Cat Rock* series, before leaving to take the lead in Toei's *Female Convict Scorpion* films, and the *Lady Snowblood* diptych that proved such a marked influence on Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill*. In order to fill the roles that such departures left vacant, Nikkatsu continued with the same star system approach it had utilised with its matinee idols of the '60s, picking out the unpolished diamonds from the rough and ready world of pink to groom for their new range; figures such as Kazuko Shirakawa, Junko Miyashita, Etsuko Hara, Miki Hayashi, Rumi Tama, Yasuko Matsui, Akemi Nijô and Naomi Tani. Other actresses made the move from modelling careers, nude revue shows or theatrical troupes, or either auditioned for the studio or were scouted on the street. The allure of these new icons was celebrated in tie-in

photo-shoots for glamour magazines and merchandise like the calendars the company put out annually.

Having taken the lead role in *Apartment Wife: Afternoon Affair*, Kazuko Shirakawa is considered the first Roman Porno queen. Born 30 September, 1947 in Nagasaki prefecture, she made her screen debut in 1967, in Kan Mukai's *Girls Dormitory*, and was already a big name in the pink world before her Nikkatsu debut. But even with the increased pay and security provided by a contract with Nikkatsu, she hesitated prior to her move. Sex might have been virtually ubiquitous at the lower end of the market for the past ten years, but it was still considered embarrassing, shameful or dirty in much of the public's mind. "I was worried what my parents would think if I went to Nikkatsu. I was sure Nikkatsu would put my picture all over the place. But I really wanted to work with a big crew, to be filmed by a top cameraman, and make some really good films."¹⁷⁷ In the end she took the plunge, and starred in just fewer than twenty Roman Porno titles, before bowing out with her 1973 commemorative biopic, *True Story Kazuko Shirakawa: Naked Resumé*, to marry one of Nikkatsu's sales reps. She returned to a mainstream acting career in 1976 following her divorce, with small roles in Shôhei



above: Kazuko Shirakawa, the first Roman Porno starlet, was one of the many actresses recruited by Nikkatsu from the *eroduction* world. This still is from Giichi Nishihara's *Sexy Angel* (1969), released several years before Roman Porno made her a near household name.



above: The fragile beauty of Setsuko Ogawa (left) was well-suited for films like Chûsei Sone's *Immortal Love* (1972), a sexy adaptation of an oft-filmed classic ghost story. Hajime Tanimoto and Miki Hayashi are also depicted in this scene from the film. ©Nikkatsu Corporation

Imamura's *Vengeance Is Mine* (1979) and *Eijanaika* (1981), and Yoshimitsu Morita's *Family Game* (1983).

Setsuko Ogawa, the star of *Sensual History: Shogun's Harem Secret Story* (also known by the English-language DVD release title of *Castle Orgies*) – the period drama that played alongside the first *Apartment Wife* – was the first of Nikkatsu's new school of beauties to be launched from nowhere. In fact, she never appeared in any other companies' films, and her spell in the spotlight was actually pretty brief, consisting of twenty two Roman Porno credits between 1971 and 1974. With her ivory complexion, slim, willowy figure and her graceful demureness, she was used to great effect playing enigmatic classical Japanese beauties.

Ogawa took the lead in each of the seven entries of the Edo period-set *Sensual History (Irogoyomi)* series. In the second entry, *Female Artist of the Floating World*, released at the end of 1971, she played Oseki, the wife of a struggling painter named Setsuei who, despite a debilitating illness, leads a contented but impoverished small-town existence. Their tranquil life is shattered when a sadistic serial rapist, roaming free around the area, violently assaults Oseki as she is picking herbs with which to prepare a medicinal draft for her husband. Oseki attempts to erase the memory by helping her husband work on a series of erotic prints, her imagination fuelled

by the sexual activities going on in the inn where she works. Setsuei sells these to his patron as his own, thus adding salve to the couple's financial woes when the prints prove remarkably popular. But painful memories of her rape are everywhere, and when Setsuei eventually succumbs to his lifelong illness, the grieving Oseki decides, at last, to take her revenge on her assailant.

Female Artist of the Floating World was voted the seventh best film of its year by *Eiga Geijutsu* magazine, making the film's debut director, Chûsei Sone, one of the first from the world of Roman Porno to be treated with any degree of respect by the critical establishment. Just as the new brand had seen a spring-cleaning of its old star performers, so too did the established directors who had made the Nikkatsu Action movies in the '60s depart, leaving a fresh stage for a whole wave of budding talents to move onto. Figures like Masaru Konuma and Noboru Tanaka, who had worked as assistants during the previous decade, were afforded the chance to make their debuts. Roman Porno provided a reset button for the entire company.

Chûsei Sone was born in Gunma Prefecture on 1 October, 1937, and graduated from Tôhoku University with a degree in Art History in 1962. As a young man, the films of the new Polish directors, like Andrzej Wajda, that the Art Theatre Guild had just begun to distribute, made

quite an impression upon him. Upon joining Nikkatsu, he served out his apprenticeship with directors including Buichi Saitô, Yôichi Ushihara, Takumi Furukawa and Seijun Suzuki. Here, he contributed to the script of the latter's *Branded to Kill* as part of the eight-man project development team who hid behind the pseudonym Hachirô Guryû (the 'hachi' part of the name means 'eight'). Led by Suzuki, other members of the collective included the future director of *Love Hunter*, Seiichirô Yamaguchi, the idiosyncratic art director Takeo Kimura, and the screenwriters Atsushi Yamatoya and Yôzô Tanaka.¹⁷⁸ It is worth also recalling here Sone's brief relationship with Wakamatsu Pro during the mid-'60s, when he moonlighted with Yamatoya and Tanaka writing scripts under the pseudonym of Yoshiaki Ôtani. Put simply, when he began directing Roman Porno, Sone was certainly no stranger to the world of erotic filmmaking, and in fact, his final foray outside of it would quite literally prove disastrous.

Sone's strengths as a filmmaker are amply demonstrated in the erotic chiller *Immortal Love* (also known under the English title of *Hellish Love*), his 1972 vehicle for the lissom starlet Ogawa. Based on a supernatural folktale that had been filmed a number of times, including a version for Shochiku by Satsuo Yamamoto in 1968, as *A Tale of Peonies and Lanterns*, the new Nikkatsu version swapped the first character of the title to change *kaidan*, or 'ghost story' into *seidan*, or 'sex story'. Ogawa plays Otsuyu, the only daughter of the ageing samurai Ijima, who falls for Shinzaburô, a lowly *rônin* (masterless samurai) with little in the way of prospects. Frail and sickly, the pallid Ogawa already seems to exist halfway between the realms of the living and the dead, as the two young lovers trade passionate glances from a respectful distance. One day, Shinzaburô dreams of consummating their love, after which Otsuyu entrusts him with a lock of her hair and pledges to return to him on 13 August. But his reverie turns abruptly into a nightmare as Otsuyu's father bursts in on them after their coupling and, drawing his sword, accidentally slays his daughter. Shinzaburô awakes with a start to find himself clutching the lock in his hand. He is later informed that Otsuyu has died. Nevertheless, the planned nocturnal visitation takes place, as promised, on the agreed date. Realising that the day in question is the Obon festival, during which the dead return to the world of the living, Shinzaburô is stricken with terror and seals himself into his quarters, inscribing Buddhist scriptures on the door to ward off this amorous spirit. As the eerie echoing clip-clop of Otsuyu's *geta* clogs announce her ethereal presence alongside the ghostly chime of her attendant's bell in the dark streets outside his chamber, Shinzaburô's reserve is slowly sapped.

A highly successful genre piece in its own right, *Immortal Love* functions on many more levels than the reductive labelling of a sex film might suggest, with the carefully-choreographed lovemaking scenes brief and



above: Sally May as *Foreign Mistress Oman*, here seen in the poster for the first entry in the series, *Rainy Holland Slope* (1972). ©Nikkatsu Corporation

mild enough not to cause much in the way of embarrassment. Notable also is Sone's attention to period detail and his creation of a tenebrous cinematic space in which the boundaries between dreams and reality, the living and the dead, become increasingly hard to discern.

In his early cycle of works, Sone proved remarkably adept at moulding different film styles to fit the Roman Porno format. His *Virgin Courtesan*, for example, was a bawdy comedy about a simple-minded young peasant girl (Yûko Katagiri) sold to a brothel who, through various mishaps and misadventures, manages to cling on to her virginity until the final scenes. His first two films in the *Foreign Mistress Oman* (*Rashamen Oman*) trilogy – *Rainy Holland Slope* (1972) and *Fallen Equinox Flowers* (1972), the latter penned by Yamatoya – featured the exotic blonde courtesan Oman (played by Sally May), who travels with her Japanese lover from Shanghai to Nagasaki in search of her lost mother. Her appearance in the city in the early-1930s, when Japan was in active conflict with China and its relationships with the rest of the world were consequently souring rapidly, leads to Oman encountering a great deal of prejudice and hostility on her quest.

While such elegant period pieces were Sone's original speciality, he turned to a contemporary setting

with his seventh film, *Lusty Sisters* (1972), starring Akemi Nijô. Unfortunately, even by this early stage he had already accomplished his best work. The subsequent story of his career is a tragic one. Highly regarded for his early films, the director began to lose his edge in the mid-'70s, and was never fully able to recapture his past glories, though he did regain some of his earlier kudos with the first two entries in the *Angel Guts* series – *High School Coed: Angel Guts* (1978) and *Angel Guts: Red Classroom* (1979). In 1984, he left Nikkatsu to join forces with Mamoru Watanabe to form the Film Workers production company, but it folded rather quickly without actually leaving much of a mark. Sone managed to make one further film distributed by Nikkatsu, *Adultery* (1986), produced through the Osaka-based company ENK. Following this he attempted to embark on a major project outside the world of the sex film, *Flying* (1988), set in the world of gambling and speedboat racing. Alas, it was all to end in tears; to finance it, he had borrowed a lot of money from a local yakuza group, which he found himself unable to pay back when the film became a resounding flop. Sone fled, disappearing completely from view. Rumours have it that he was last spotted driving a bus around the town of Kumamoto in Kyûshû, far from harm's way, though we shall probably never know the real story.

The most visually-gifted of Nikkatsu's directors of the period was Noboru Tanaka, who was born in Nagano on 15 August, 1937 and died of a brain aneurysm 4 October, 2006. Tanaka studied French literature at Tokyo's Meiji University, and harboured an early ambition to become a novelist himself. A fortuitous job working on location on Akira Kurosawa's *Yojimbo* provided the initial spark of enthusiasm that steered him towards a filmmaking career, and in 1961 he successfully passed the Nikkatsu entrance exams and was soon working under directors such as Shôhei Imamura and Seijun Suzuki. As a young man he had enjoyed writing poetry, and soon began to see a connection between this purely literary artistic form – of creating images and strings of associated meanings through words and expressions – and cinema, where each image provided its own emotional response depending on the individual viewer. As he himself explains, "Each expression in a poem may contain countless meanings... In other words, each expression provides a lot of imagery. Then I thought that in reverse, I could use images to express my poetic world. I thought that the image world of filmmaking might be something I should explore."¹⁷⁹

Tanaka's brand of cinema is very much image-driven, yet amounts to much more than the sum of its individual scenes and shots. From his 1972 debut, *Droplets from a Petal*, through titles like *Night Train Woman* (1972), *Lewd Family: Fox and Raccoon* (1972), *Midnight Fairy* (1973), *A Woman Called Sada Abe* (1975), and *Torture!* (1977), Tanaka made just under 25 works for

the studio. He also made a couple of non-erotic features outside it, including *Kobe International Gang* (1975) for Toei and *Village of Doom* (1983) for Shochiku. For Toei, he also made *The Sex Life and Escape of Gangster Ando Noboru* (1976), which one can assume is a partially-embellished biopic of the real-life-gangster-turned-action-star of the title, starring the man himself as he bed-hops across the country while fleeing from the law.

Even in his more routine outings, Tanaka always rose above his source material. *Private Life of a School Mistress* (1973), starring Ayako Ichikawa, was an early entry in one of the studio's most enduring series. In it, the cradle-snatching schoolmistress Naomi shares not only a classroom, but also a bedroom with her sullen yet hot-headed pet student Keiji. One day, Keiji impulsively decides to bring back someone more of his own age to the apartment that he and Naomi have made their love nest, in the form of virginal classmate Kazuko (Hitomi Kozue). After dazzling her with balloon tricks using his chemistry set, he deflowers her on a white sheet laid across the bare wooden floorboards. Naomi returns, catching them both red-handed, yet appears to forgive Keiji's youthful self-indulgence and allows Kazuko to stay the night on the couch. The incident, however, drives an emotional wedge between her and Keiji, which, when she allows herself to be drunkenly led into a love hotel with an older teaching associate, Sakaguchi, leads to a tragic end to the affair and possibly also her teaching career. The film ranked number eight in the *Eiga Geijutsu* best-of-year list.

Tanaka built upon this early critical success with *Confidential Report: Sex Market* (1974), an impressionistic collage of fragments from the day-to-day life of a nineteen-year-old prostitute named Tome (played by Meika Seri) and the various other characters who inhabit her milieu, as she plies her trade in a rundown part of downtown Osaka. Shot one hot, sweaty summer, predominantly in monochrome and using handheld cameras – lending it the air of a late-'60s European arthouse movie – it is among the most distinctive-looking Roman Porno movies produced by Nikkatsu.

Further proof of Tanaka's versatility can be witnessed in the form of *Watcher in the Attic* (1976), a morbid tale of voyeurism and murder set in a boarding house populated by a host of eccentrics and grotesques, and presided over by the dark-veiled noblewoman Lady Minako (Junko Miyashita). The film is based on the work of Japan's most famous mystery-horror writer, Tarô Hirai (1894-1965), who derived his nom-de-plume of Edogawa Rampo from the Japanese pronunciation of the American Gothic writer Edgar Allan Poe, in celebration of his Western literary inspiration (the characters used in the Japanese spelling actually translate as 'Chaos Walking by the Edo River'). Rampo's dark early tales distinctively capture the spirit of the Taishô Period (1912-25) in which they were written, and in which this particular film is set: *Watcher*

in the Attic ends apocalyptically with the Great Kantô Earthquake (*Kantô Daishinsai*) that levelled most of Tokyo and the surrounding area on 1 September, 1923; coincidentally the very same year Rampo's first short story was published. It was a period of relative liberalism, where foreign fashions, technologies and customs became assimilated wholesale into everyday life. A strong erotic undercurrent permeated Rampo's work of the period, which, along with these elaborated foreign influences led to its labelling as *ero guro nansensu* (erotic grotesque nonsense), and its suppression as the country marched into war with the dawn of Shôwa Era (1926-1989). It is somewhat surprising then that Roman Porno and *pinku eiga* have only ever spawned one other Rampo adaptation; an earlier version of *Watcher in the Attic*, directed by Akitaka Kimata in 1970 for his own company, Pro Taka.

Tanaka's version presents the period as a pandemonium of styles and colours, from the antiquated and decaying trappings of the boarding house to the carnivalesque apparel of its inhabitants. These include: a wayward Catholic priest who takes advantage of several of the fallen angels at the house; a woman artist of dubious sexual inclinations who shares her chamber with her model, whom she keeps adorned with animal hides; an ashen-faced Pierrot whom Lady Minako has adopted from a nearby funfair and taken

under her wing in return for sexual favours; and her doting chauffeur, who, in reference to another of Rampo's twisted tales, *The Human Chair* (itself filmed in 1997 by Toshiyuki Mizutani), fashions a large leather armchair with a man-size compartment large enough for him to secrete himself, in order to be closer to the object of his desire. All of this falls under the intense gaze of Gôda (played by Renji Ishibashi, an actor who now specialises in gnarly old yakuza roles for directors such as Takashi Miike), the mysterious recluse who occupies the upper room and prowls above, peeping at this perverse environment, inadvertently finding himself the complicit witness to a murder.

Watcher in the Attic gives Rampo's surreal fantasy world a visual dimension that would form the basis for many subsequent adaptations of his work, including Rintarô Mayuzumi and Kazuyoshi Okuyama's celebration of the author's real and imaginary life, *The Mystery of Rampo* (1994), Akio Jissôji's adaptations including his own 1994 version of the same tale and *The D-Slope Murder Case* (1998), and the post-millennial revitalisation of the author's works in the omnibus movie *Rampo Noir* (2005). Its very *mise-en-scène* plays upon the tension between the horrific and the ludicrous that is encapsulated by the word 'grotesque', with Tanaka eschewing showy cinema technique to downplay the true horribleness of such bizarre scenes



above: Meika Seri plies her trade in downtown Osaka, as Noboru Tanaka brings a distinctly European arthouse aesthetic to *Confidential Report: Sex Market* (1974).
©Nikkatsu Corporation



above: Junko Miyashita as Lady Minako revels in the attentions of Shirô Yumemura's grease-painted flunkey in Tanaka's outlandish *Watcher in the Attic* (1976).
©Nikkatsu Corporation

as the devoted Pierrot throttled between the thighs of the lady of the house. Further tension derives from the uncomfortable fusion of foreign and traditional elements that characterise the Taishô era. In one scene, Lady Minako intrepidly picks at the carcass of a grilled frog she has been served up for a romantic candlelit dinner by an aging suitor of hers, after he impresses her by telling her that he learnt to cook in France.

The voyeuristic component inherent in *Watcher in the Attic* provides much of its vicarious *frisson*. It is immediately clear that Minako is fully aware that both her sexual games and her murderous misdemeanours are being witnessed through the camera's-eye vantage point of the peephole in the rafters, acknowledging the viewer's powerless and passive spectatorial role as she returns our gaze. The recursion to voyeuristic scenarios provided a major theme for much of Japanese erotic cinema. The psychological ramifications were later almost clinically dissected in the films of Hisayasu Satô, whom we shall look at in more detail in a later chapter. But there was possibly a secondary motive in the regular application of these *nozoki* (peeping) scenes.

In its first five years, Roman Porno was surprisingly inexplicit. Sixties pink filmmakers had adhered to Japan's anti-obscenity laws by making sure the offending areas were kept out of frame. Early Roman

Porno movies such as *Watcher in the Attic*, subject to the same impediments, drew much of their erotic potency through their scenarios, rather than how much they showed. Sex scenes, when portrayed, were carefully-framed, so that cunningly-positioned foreground objects such as ornaments, flowers or pieces of furniture, obstructed a full view, or dark swathes of shadow and intrusive hazy patches of optical-blurring known as *bokashi* concealed the forbidden fruits that might otherwise have reached the viewer's eye. Framing the sex scenes from an awkward *nozoki* point-of-view perspective, through keyholes, gaps in open doors, holes in walls etc, proved one particularly expedient method of blocking the action.

As the decade wore on, the methods used to keep obscenity from the screen became sometimes more ingenious than the scripts, as Nikkatsu waged a relentless war of attrition against the censors. Hands and, in the SM-themed works, large tangled knots of rope, served to keep crotches covered. The raising of the outer hip of the actresses as they lay on their backs and their panties were slid down to their ankles became another familiar method of keeping privates shielded. But just in case a renegade strand of hair made it onto film, actresses were carefully shaved, resulting in at least one amusing anecdote from Toshiharu Ikeda who, while



above: Hatsue Tonooka shakes her stuff. From his pre-Roman Porno debut *Life of a Striptease Lover* (1968) onwards, Tatsumi Kumashiro often depicted the day-to-day lives of strippers and sex workers. ©Nikkatsu Corporation

serving his apprenticeship as an assistant, accidentally nicked Naomi Tani's inner thigh while tidying her up.

One Nikkatsu director who saw Japan's censorship laws as an active impediment to his creative vision was Tatsumi Kumashiro. Born 24 April, 1927, Kumashiro was a little older than contemporaries such as Sone and Tanaka. In fact, he had already made his directorial debut prior to Roman Porno's arrival with *Life of a Striptease Lover* (also known as *A Thirsty Life*, 1968),¹⁸⁰ the first of several titles by the director to focus on the life of a striptease artiste. The film was not so well received upon its release. In the new production environment, however, he flourished to become the studio's rising star. From his debut in 1972 with *Wet Lips*, Kumashiro went on to direct a further twenty or so works at the studio, many of which featured the word 'wet' (*nureta*) somewhere in the title. Not only was he the most successful of this first generation of directors in achieving any sort of significant filmmaking career outside of Roman Porno, he also made, among other titles, *Light of Africa* (1975) for Toho, a 1979 remake of Nobuo Nakagawa's *Jigoku* for Toei, and several movies we will look at more closely in the next chapter. He also received the highest degree of public acclaim for his work within the genre, with his works regularly making it into *Kinema Junpô* and *Eiga Geijutsu's* annual best ten lists.

Woman Hell: Woods Are Wet (1973) takes place in a dark, shadowy netherworld far-removed from any recognisable civilised setting. The musty period trappings of its locations could just as easily stand in for Taishô era Japan as the imaginary pre-revolutionary France in which the Marquis Donatien Alphonse François de Sade (1740 – 1814) staged his subversive tale of amorality from which the film is adapted, *Justine, or the Misfortunes of Virtue* (*Justine, ou les malheurs de la vertu*, 1791). The film begins with a young maiden fleeing through a dark tunnel and out into a foreboding forest. Onscreen text informs us that the girl, played by Hiroko Isayama, is Sachiko, a young serving maid who has been on the run for three days after being falsely accused of killing her mistress. A large black car draws up alongside her, and its passenger (Rie Nakagawa), a mysterious white-clad lady seated behind the chauffeur, introduces herself as Yôko and offers her sanctuary and shelter for as long as she needs it, in return for companionship. The two are driven back to a gloomy and oppressive cottage, lit only by candles, in the heart of the forest. Here Sachiko is introduced to Yôko's two housemaids and her cruel and domineering husband Ryûnosuke (played by Hatsuo Yamaya, a familiar face from Wakamatsu's films). Ryûnosuke immediately outlays his scam of fleecing all the money from passing travellers and hunters who stop for shelter at his abode, and asks

Sachiko to become involved. When two such voyagers arrive at the cottage, a lengthy spree of debauchery, flagellation and, finally, murder ensues.

Woods Are Wet represents an unconcealed denunciation of a state-imposed morality targeted squarely at the same authorities that were at the time bringing a public prosecution on Nikkatsu under Article 175, for Seiichirô Yamaguchi's *Love Hunter* films. Just as de Sade did in his fiction, Kumashiro uses his characters as mouthpieces for his oppositional stance. (In fact, a translation of de Sade's companion piece to the story, *Juliette, or the Prosperities of Vice* (*Juliette, ou les prospérités du vice*, 1797) had itself been the subject of a major obscenity trial in Japan in 1960.) A long speech delivered by Ryûnosuke to justify his own selfish quest for the ultimate pleasure after the first wave of torture includes the line, "What you accept as ethical is contrived by those in authority so they can control people". The film's contents are actually not half as explicit or vicious as a plot description might suggest. There is no nudity at all in the first half, as the stifling atmosphere of anticipatory dread is built up. What prevents the lengthy scenes of abuse and humiliation, meted out on both Sachiko and the hunters, from reaching the depths of unpleasantness that many of the industry's later sadomasochistic torture spectacles plumbed is Kumashiro's device of exposing the hypocrisy of any form of censorship, by masking off huge portions of the screen with obtrusive black squares and quite explicitly making such bowdlerisations part of the text of the film.

He had adopted a similar tack in his previous outing, the nihilistic *Twisted Path of Love* (aka *Lovers Are Wet*, 1973). The film features an introverted young loner named Katsu who, returning to the coastal village where he was raised after a long spell drifting around the country, refuses to acknowledge that he is the very same person that everyone recognises him to be. Katsu hides behind this self-deluding show of anonymity to violate every single social convention, spying on a young couple making love in the sand dunes, and after they introduce him to a young female friend, attempting to rape her. During the film's most memorable set-piece of a group game of strip-leapfrog on the beach, Kumashiro draws attention to the full-frontal nudity by using a pin to scratch the emulsion away from the film surface above his actors' pubic regions, creating a bizarre writhing spaghetti of lines. This was apparently a fairly commonplace practice with imported foreign films when such scenes couldn't be cut from the film without destroying the narrative continuity. Donald Richie mentions how the decidedly non-titillatory nude figures walking in the background of the concert film *Woodstock* suddenly adopted a more prominent role after such a technique was used.¹⁸¹

Kumashiro's most articulate attack came with *World of Geisha* (1973). This sophisticated adaptation of a novel by Kafû Nagai (1879-1959), directed from Kumashiro's

own script, tackles the problematic issues surrounding censorship within a framework of sexual, financial and political relationships. Nagai was a renowned playwright, novelist and essayist who travelled widely throughout America and Europe in the early years of the 20th Century, documenting and publishing his adventures. While in Japan, he was most at home in such lascivious locales as the bawdyhouses of the Yoshiwara pleasure quarter, and it's easy to imagine that his trips abroad took him to similar haunts. When his book *Furansu Monogatari* (*The French Tale*) found itself immediately suppressed by government censors in 1907 for its sexual content, he wrote a number of erotic fictional works which were circulated illicitly underground, including the source for Kumashiro's film.¹⁸²

Kumashiro resituates the action unfolding in the book's geisha house locale to the year 1918, to analyse positions of power such as that between client and geisha, who, for all their refinement, are little better than factory workers, sold into sexual serfdom at an early age with little chance of repaying their loans without the aid of a wealthy patron. With no plot as such, the film hinges around bashful Sodeko (Junko Miyashita) as she spends her first night with a new client. As they make love on the futon, the foreground tastefully draped with black gauze, Kumashiro documents the various goings on behind the closed sliding doors and rice paper screens of the establishment. Hanamaru (Meika Seri), a young trainee, is forced to polish floors while clutching an egg between her thighs to develop her prowess at sexually satisfying her customers. An older geisha, Hanae (Moeko Ezawa) drinks herself into a stupor in the privacy of her chamber, while in a different room another performs a stylised striptease for a roomful of clients that culminates in her showering coins from between her legs. But trouble sets in when Sodeko looks like she is set to violate one of golden rules of geisha etiquette: 'Don't fall for your first client.'

Kumashiro added socio-historical context to give substance to his anti-censorship tract through etchings and colour-toned photos of the significant political events of the time: The Rice Riots of 1918; the Korean uprisings; the Russian November revolution of 1917 and the country's subsequent Civil War (1918-20) pushing Japan to send troops into Siberia to combat the red menace. He also obliquely tackles the censorship of Nagai's suppressed novel. While the codes of geisha etiquette are relayed as flowery intertitles between scenes, the text that overlays the screen to accompany the heightened ecstasy of Sodeko's lovemaking ("I'm coming again!!"), like the reports of Japanese casualties in Russia, are XX-ed out, and once more Kumashiro masks large portions of the screen during the sex scenes to draw parallels between the government censorship of newspapers and literature during the Taishô and early Shôwa period and the strict limitations imposed by Eirin on contemporary portrayals of cinematic sexual activity.

World of Geisha is a perhaps the finest amalgam of Kumashiro's ideas and concerns from his early films, and it led to the sequel, *World of Geisha 2: The Precocious Lad*, the following year. The director was habitually drawn to such lowlife topics as the lives of prostitutes, strippers and other workers in the sex industry. His 1974 film, *Street of Joy*, was one of Nikkatsu's throwbacks to the 'Red Light' or *akasen* boom of the late '50s. Its story unfolded in the same brothel environment as *Street of Shame*, though adopted an approach that was more Imamura than Mizoguchi. In fact, Kumashiro regularly used Shinsaku Himeda, the same cameraman as Shôhei Imamura, in his '60s work for Nikkatsu like *Insect Woman* and *The Pornographers*, and one can detect the same intentionally cluttered frame composition and focus on women as strong, vital characters that marked the work of his predecessor. *Street of Joy* is set on New Year's Day of 1955, the day before the abolition of licensed brothels, and follows the girls of one such institution in Tokyo's pleasure district, along with their clients/lovers, as they ply their final night of trade before they must face an uncertain future.

Like many of Kumashiro's films, *Street of Joy* uses extra-diegetic devices that include sequences of cartoon sketches to establish and situate its characters, as well as using traditional and popular *enka* songs, which are often reprised by characters in the film singing or humming them without musical accompaniment. *Wet Desire: Special Appearance 21 People* (1974) adopted a similarly freeform approach to what might otherwise be a fairly straightforward narrative, by jumbling up time and location with sequences marked off by intertitles bearing legends such as 'Then was Now' and 'Now is Then'. As well as cutting and inter-cutting abruptly from the present action to related flashbacks of past events as the straightforward narrative is relayed through the memories and experiences of its principal players, Kumashiro also blurs the boundaries between character and performer by having his two main actresses, Yûko Katagiri and Meika Seri, playing under names that are either their own, or very similar.

The film is ostensibly a follow-up to *Sayuri Ichijô: Wet Lust* (1972), and just like it, it focuses on the off-stage lives, loves and rivalries of contemporary sex performers, though in this case we have a whole entourage of exotic dancers, with the drama revolving around the blonde-wigged Yûko (Katagiri), her dance partner Meiko (Seri), their manager-cum-lover Hôsuke and the various characters that surround them. Hôsuke's first chance meeting with Meiko occurs shortly after the discovery of a wallet stuffed with money on the streets of Osaka; Meiko and the money allow Hôsuke to expand his pimping enterprise into staging lavish live nude shows. The two travel around the country with the latter honing her act in a theatre in Tôhoku prefecture, and Hôsuke taking an active role in coaching Meiko's routine. Eventually they are joined by Yûko, a former lover of

Hôsuke, and the two girls are soon gaining notoriety for their steamy lesbian stage show. But tensions mount within this bizarre love triangle when Yûko and Meiko's routine starts spilling over into real life.

Kumashiro was a sickly, slight man who, especially throughout the latter part of his career, was plagued by ill health. During the '80s he reputedly had an oxygen tank with him on set. The director died in 1995, but he is fondly remembered as the most accomplished filmmaker to work in Roman Porno, held in reverence by all of the cast and crew who either worked alongside him or learned the ropes under his supervision. It is perhaps because of this frail physical state, as has been noted by actress Kazuko Shirakawa, that he proved so capable of understanding the fragility of the human condition.¹⁸³

Kumashiro won as many admirers for his humanistic and vulnerable treatment of his subjects as he did for his *avant-gardist* stylistic experimentations. His most highly regarded work in the field is also his most formally straightforward. *Woman with the Red Hair* (1979) could be, depending on how you choose to look at it, the story of the changing friendship between two construction workers, Kôzô and Takao, which comes under threat when the titular figure moves into Kôzô's apartment after the two men encounter her in their truck, as she waits for a lift on the roadside in the pouring rain. It could also be the portrayal of the all-consuming relationship between Kôzô and this anonymous ethereal fantasy figure as subsequently, sealed away in his squalid bare room furnished with little more than a mattress, a *kotatsu* table heater and a gas stove, and with the rain pounding continuously upon the window panes, they seek to indulge each other's sexual desires, more out of desperation than for pleasure. It is simultaneously a depiction of the conjunction of male vanity and working class machismo that threatens to drive away the very thing it craves, of a woman's inner strength and tenacity, and of the gulf in understanding that exists between the sexes. There is certainly more to the film than its superficial reading as a straightforward male fantasy. As Kumashiro once stated, "It is also possible to see it as a film about a woman who finds her man who satisfies her sexual desire."¹⁸⁴

A difficult film for viewers coming at it cold, despite its realist style *Woman with the Red Hair* is best regarded in terms of out-and-out fantasy. It is a love-triangle character study built upon archetypes, central to which is the tangibly homoerotic relationship between the brash Kôzô and the dim-witted co-worker who idolises him and seems incapable of stepping out of his shadow. In an early scene, Kazuko (played by an actress known by the single name of Ako), the daughter of the boss of the construction company where they both work, attempts to seduce Takao and finds herself pretty much gang-raped by the two men when Takao is unable to perform without his mentor. Kazuko later claims she is pregnant



above: Junko Miyashita turned critics' heads with her powerful performance as the *Woman with the Red Hair* in Kumashiro's 1979 film of the same name, which depicted her turbulent relationship with Renji Ishibashi's coarse and clueless construction worker. ©Nikkatsu Corporation

below: Gulf of understanding: Junko Miyashita and Renji Ishibashi in *Woman with the Red Hair*. ©Nikkatsu Corporation



and traps Takao into a marriage proposal, which in itself would seem to offer a move up from his current lowly status. Takao however, is unable to accept that a wedge has been driven between him and his buddy through the intrusion of both women, and insists that he be allowed to indulge himself with Kôzô's new live-in lover himself. Kôzô is strangely obtuse to the fact that the needy flame-haired woman who has moved into his crude apartment and who has literally worn him raw with her voracious sexual appetite might possess something more than just a purely physical desire for him. She gives very little information about her past, other than that she has left a husband and two young children behind her, and so Kôzô assumes the worst. One night he allows Takao to sneak into the room while the two are having sex, and against her protests, allows him to take over midway through.

The Woman with the Red Hair was voted the fourth best film of its year in *Kinema Junpô* magazine's annual rankings, and owes as much to Kumashiro's deft handling of the material as it does to its memorable central performance by Junko Miyashita (which earned her the Best Actress of the Year award from the *Hôchi News* sports paper), and its strong script by Haruhiko Arai. Arai was not only a regular screenwriter for Kumashiro (and at one point also wrote for Kôji Wakamatsu alongside Masao Adachi under the Izuru Deguchi pseudonym), but also edited the scholarly cineaste journal *Eiga Geijutsu*, and was the author of several books on Japanese film. Nowadays, he continues to write for the screen, with recent credits including Ryûichi Hiroki's *Vibrator* (2003) and *It's Only Talk* (2005), both non-pink films that have found themselves widely praised on the international film festival circuit for their powerful portrayals of the emotional worlds of modern-day Japanese women. This particular film was an adaptation of a story written by Kenji Nakagami (1946-92), who was born into the stigmatised class of the *burakumin* (literally 'village people'), a small sector of the Japanese population who, due to obscure religious traditions (they are descended from leather tanners, a taboo profession in the days when the country's Buddhist religion forbade the eating of meat), have long faced prejudice and oppression. In novels such as *The Cape* (Misaki, 1976) the author wrote much about his impoverished upbringing in the *buraku* slum in Shingû where he grew up, which itself became the subject of Shinji Aoyama's experimental film *To the Alley: Kenji Nakagami's Surviving Film* (2000). Nakagami's writing often focused on working class characters living in provincial areas that are usually kept outside of the media's gaze.

What Junko Miyashita's performance in *The Woman with the Red Hair* proved was that the best of Nikkatsu's starlets were more than just pretty faces. They could actually act. Born in Tokyo on 29 January, 1949, Miyashita got her first acting role after being scouted on the street and cast in Aoi Eiga's *I Lost Control of Myself Like This*

(1971), directed by Satoru Kobayashi. She appeared in around 20 pink films in her first year alone, including Wakamatsu's *Sex Family* (1971) and Banmei Takahashi's *Rape Escape Crime* (1972), the latter produced by Giichi Nishihara's company Aoi Eiga. She was soon spotted and plucked from the pink industry by Nikkatsu and appeared in her first lead for the studio in the 1972 production *Apartment Wife: Unforgettable Night*. With an innate ability to project a greater than usual range of emotions and personae than her peers, she rapidly rose to become Roman Porno's top talent through a range of parts in some of the company's finest works. Kumashiro's 1979 film was her final leading role, though she also appeared in the director's *Pleasure School: Forbidden Games* (1980), her last for the studio. Her undeniable acting talents have also been well served outside the realm of sex film, in a host of titles including: Chûsei Sone's mid-career break from Nikkatsu with the ATG-produced *Case of the Disjointed Murder* (1977); *Maggot from Hell* (1979), a throwback to the silent-movie era produced by the former *benshi* Shunsui Matsuda; Nobuo Nakagawa's final film, *Ghost Story: The Living Koheiji* (1982); Mitsuo Yanagimachi's *Fire Festival* (1985) which, like *Woman with the Red Hair*, is based on a story by Kenji Nakagami; and one of the dramatised segments of *The Sundial Carved By a Thousand Years of Notches: The Magino Village Story* (1987), Shinsuke Ogawa's mesmeric four-and-a-half hour long documentary on Japan's rural traditions. Numerous other roles include a recent appearance in the 2004 summer blockbuster about scuba-diving lifeguards, *Umizaru*.

Other Nikkatsu starlets were more cast to type. The matronly Naomi Tani, another graduate from the pink film world, possessed a well-fleshed form that made her particularly suited to appearing in the rope and rape fantasies of directors like Masaru Konuma, earning her the crown of Nikkatsu's premier fetish queen. Her role in both shaping and, quite literally, being shaped by an altogether more gruelling strain of sadomasochism-themed Roman Porno will be discussed along with the director she was most strongly tied to in a later chapter.

At the other end of the scale the later arrival of Jun Izumi, recruited to the cause after being spotted in the streets by one of Nikkatsu's talent scouts, was particularly welcome. Her sweet and wholesome girl-next-door demeanour and her well-rounded figure were particularly well served by her debut appearance in Shinichi Shiratori's *I Can Feel it* (1976). Based on the erotic novel *Jun-chan* by Daihachi Izumi and graced with a poppy soundtrack and a wonderfully garish retro look, this frothy but likeable offering saw her cast as the virginal fashion student with the same name who is awakened to the joys of sex under the tutelage of sensuous best friend Panko. It seems that everyone around her is party to this world of carnal pleasure, and none more so than Panko, who in the opening credit sequence shows her the ropes on a string hammock

with her macho, pistol-obsessed boyfriend Warusa, while Jun gazes wistfully on. With Jun's curiosity further piqued by the attentions of a rude delivery boy on a bicycle who flashes at her as she is out walking in the park one day, Panko decides it is time to lay her protégée's virginity to rest once and for all. He invites her on a hiking trip with her boyfriend and her geeky older brother, but the bespectacled salaryman's desperate attempts at seduction, as the foursome indulge in a variety of childlike 'I'll show you mine if you show me yours' type games to break down their inhibitions, fail to win Jun over. Fortunately, salvation seems at hand when she is reacquainted with an old high school sweetheart. Premature ejaculation proves an initial obstacle, but when it finally does come to pass, her deflowering proves a near religious experience.

In a similarly saucy lightweight romp helmed by Kazunari Takeda, entitled *Peeping* (1983), Izumi plays second fiddle to Mai Inoue – an actress who had appeared in *Pink Cut: Loving Hard, Loving Deep* by the now-successful mainstream director Yoshimitsu Morita in the same year – as part of a sexy duet who open a hair salon whose main attraction is that the stylists go pantyless. Inoue's main asset was her uncanny likeness to top '80s songstress Momoe Yamaguchi, and in *Peeping* she plays a high-flying university student named Momoko Yamaguchi, who returns home from Tokyo to stay with her parents in the country. Her horny papa Kôzô finds it hard remaining inattentive to Momoko's newly-apparent charms, and with any ardour between him and his wife long dead, he finds himself driven to distraction by his blossoming daughter's nubile presence, despite frequent bouts with his soapland mistress at a nearby love hotel. Meanwhile, his younger brother unexpectedly turns up at the Yamaguchi household with his Walkman-wearing girlfriend. Their frenetic sessions provide a further outlet for Kôzô's frustration, as he takes to

peeping into their bedroom. When the arrival of both his wife's younger lover – introduced to Momoko to be sized up as possible marriage material – and his own secret bit-on-the-side pretending to be a friend of Momoko's from college further add to the mélange, the numerous permutations result in more than adequate fodder for even the most jaded voyeur.

Inoue's look-alike role as Momoko is one thing, but some indication as to just how popular Roman Porno had become over the years, as well as to what extent it had shaped the cultural climate, can be gauged by Nikkatsu's success at coaxing famous figures from other fields into disrobing in front of the camera. As noted, the celebrity strippers Sayuri Ichijô and Madoka Mika had whole fictionalised biopics built around them in Tatsumi Kumashiro's *Wet Lust* (1972) and *Madoka Mika: The Woman Who Wets Her Finger* (1984). Soon even some of the most esteemed members of the acting community wanted in on the action.

One of the main points of interest in Masaru Konuma's *Lady Karuizawa* (1982) is the casting of its leading lady, Miwa Takada. An established actress of advancing years, hailing from a respected theatrical family, Takada made numerous film appearances throughout the '60s, including several *Zatôichi* movies, though this was her first major role in twelve years since Mio Ezaki's 1970 production *Comedy: It's Tough Being a Woman Too* (*Kikeki: Onna mo tsurai wa*), whose title echoes that of the Tora-san series. The plot of the lavishly staged *Lady Karuizawa* is essentially *Lady Chatterley* with the added intrigue of a dead corpse cropping up in the final quarter, and some deviant political skulduggery. Shunichi, a student working his way through college, takes a job as a waiter in the titular exclusive resort-town playground to the nation's wealthy elite, and one evening finds himself working at the luxurious summer cottage of the Nakagawa family, cast into a world of white tablecloths, marble columns and chandeliers. As the international jet-set are entertained by high-power industrialist Genichirô, all kept constantly trouging martinis and *foie gras*, Shunichi's gaze meets with that of glamorous trophy wife Yoshiko (Takada) across the crowded dining hall. But when he clumsily spills the suckling pig from the silver platter he is carrying, Genichirô is not so forgiving, and the young college boy is sent hurtling back to his side of the social divide, jobless and with no way of paying his school fees. A fresh opportunity arrives, however, when a chance encounter with Yoshiko in an outdoor garden café sees Shunichi re-employed as a home tutor for her son over the summer vacation, and he soon moves into the Nakagawa house. The lady of the house, jaded by the rough and infrequent attentions of her husband, soon finds herself being seduced by their new lodger during a moonlight nature walk with her son, and against her better judgement she is drawn into his boudoir where he awaits, standing to attention in his neatly starched Y-fronts.



above: An early *pinku eiga* role for Junko Miyashita in Banmei Takahashi's *Rape Escape Crime* (1972). ©Nikkatsu Corporation

More surprising was how keen faded songstresses were to use the genre to step back into the limelight. For example, the popular singer Sakiko Itô, who had had a successful hit at the beginning of the decade with the catchy sing-along tune *Himawari Musume* ('Sunflower Girl') played the lead role in Chûsei Sone's final film for Nikkatsu, *Tattoo* (1984), a modern-day loose reworking of the short story by Junichirô Tanizaki that has been filmed on a number of occasions, including versions by Yasuzô Masumura in 1968 and Hisayasu Satô in 2005. Combining the inherent erotic nature of the source material with Itô's own public image, the film focuses on a singer on the threshold of stardom who finds her career ruined in a case of mistaken identity when she is kidnapped and given a full body tattoo. But her revenge on those that have destroyed her future is thrillingly sweet as she begins to associate with the *yasha*, the maleficent female demon ingrained on her back.

Roles such as these often capitalised on the unique qualities of the star in question. When Midori Komatsu put in an appearance in one of Shinya Yamamoto's several works for the studio, it was on an equal billing with the beauty spot on her upper lip. According to Asian tradition, a birthmark above the mouth signifies a healthy appetite, in this case for fellatio, and so few would have been left guessing as to the contents of *Midori Komatsu's Sexy Beauty Mark* (1985).

Born in 1951, young singing sensation Yôko Kon had been appearing in the movies since the late '60s, playing major roles in studio fare such as Umetsugu Inoue's *Season of Love* (1969) from Shochiku, and Yûji Tanno's *Season of Tears* (1969) for Nikkatsu, along with the four back-up musicians from the band that she fronted, Pinky and the Killers (Pinkii to Kiraaz). By 1986, the year in which she starred in Noboru Tanaka's *View of the Bud*, the public's main interest in her was due to conjecture about the shape of her breasts. Her Roman Porno debut was an adaptation of an original novel by Akira Hayasaka, about a stripper named Yunki with inverted nipples. Beginning the film coupling on stage with the rough-and-ready Genzô in front of an audience of dirty old men, Yunki's infamous caved-in teats rapidly earn her a large crowd of admirers. By the end of the movie she has risen to the top of the *honban* live sex performance circuit with a carefully staged show in which flowers are inserted into the soft fleshy notches by her new partner, a former schoolteacher forced to retire after feeling up the prepubescent chests of his pupils.

But Roman Porno's strangest celebrity comeback attempt was that of Runa Takamura. There's probably a large percentage of male viewers in any country that secretly yearns to see their favourite idols of yesteryear stripped naked, collared and bound to the bed-head by a dog leash before being taken rudely from behind by a cold-hearted pimp wearing shades. Even so, the fall from grace of Runa Takamura was more sensational than most. Takamura formally made up one quarter of the all-



above: Fallen idol Runa Takamura bares body and soul in Kôyû Ohara's *Runa's Confession: The Men Who Flocked Around Me* (1976). ©Nikkatsu Corporation

girl pop combo Golden Half, who rode high in the late '60s and took both its name and its entire *raison d'être* from the fact that all of the members were half-Japanese: the band were present in the nightclub numbers in Hasebe's pre-Roman Porno exploitation flick *Stray Cat Rock: Sex Hunter*, performing their best-known hit, *Kiroyi Sakuranbo* ('Yellow Cherry').

Kôyû Ohara's 1976 filmic rendition of Takamura's kiss-and-tell exposé, *Runa's Confession: The Men Who Flocked Around Me*, saw the singer basically reprising her own rags-to-riches-and-back-down-into-the-gutter tale in a salacious pseudo-documentary reconstruction of her life, leading from her teenage years living with her mother (played by Rumi Tama) and growing up in the penumbra of the US Airbase at Yokota. Here she is spotted by an opportunistic talent scout who throws her in with the other members of Golden Half (none of whom are played by the original members), and the quartet soon have a major hit on their hands. From then on, it's a slippery slope as Runa gets dragged off course by playboy actor Kenichi, and stumbles into the false paradise of barbiturate addiction before suffering a complete nervous breakdown. In order to emphasise the veracity of what has gone before, Ohara, one of the second-rank directors from Roman Porno's first decade, appears as himself at the end of the film, giving



カラー作品 修女ルナの告白 映倫

above: Former Golden Half member Runa Takamura's exotic pedigree is exploited to the full in Masaru Konuma's *Cloistered Nun: Runa's Confession* (1976). ©Nikkatsu Corporation

directions to Runa while she lies naked on her silken sheets, clutching a rose as the cameras start to roll.

Runa's Confession was not Takamura's first Roman Porno role; that was in a film released a mere three months before, which played heavily upon its starlet's exotic foreign looks for its kinky frolics. Directed with characteristic gusto by Masaru Konuma, *Cloistered Nun: Runa's Confession* featured the Golden Half singer as the fallen angel who, having fled from a European convent, plagued by memories of being strung up with the bell rope by the lecherous abbot, materialises at the house of her sister. Here she systematically seduces her future brother-in-law and disrupts her sister's money-making racket of selling ink-blot impressions of her genitalia to a consortium of wealthy businessmen, before making off with the money with a lesbian acquaintance from her olden convent days – and all without even removing her wimple. It was a typically profane offering in the most peculiar of Nikkatsu's pornographic sub-genres, the nunsplottation movie, and it was by no means the last Japanese film to feature lesbianism, bondage, masturbating nuns nor even vaginal ink-blots. But perhaps such topics are better left for a later chapter.

Footnotes

177 Interviewed for the Channel 4 TV documentary *Mondo Macabro*, transmitted 16 December, 2001.

178 Kimura, Yamatoya and Tanaka all have screenwriting credits for the films Suzuki made after his firing from Nikkatsu, with Yamatoya putting his name to, amongst other things, the director's baffling 1977 comeback movie set in the world of professional golfing, *A Story of Sorrow and Sadness*, and his only animation credit *Lupin III: The Golden Legend of Babylon* (1985). He was joined by Kimura for *Capone Cries Hard* (1985). Tanaka wrote the three films comprising Suzuki's Taisho Trilogy; *Zigeunerweisen* (1980), *Heat Haze Theatre* (1981) and *Yumeji* (1991).

179 Interviewed by author on September 2004, included on Artsmagic's DVD release of *Angel Guts: Nami*.

180 The title actually translates as *Life at the Front-Row Seat of the Theatre*.

181 Richie, Donald. *The Japanese Eroducton*.

182 Nagai's book was published originally under the title of *Under the Four-and-a-Half Tatami Sliding Door* (*Yojōhan fusuma no shitabari*), which is slightly different from the Japanese title for Kumashiro's film, *Behind the Four-and-a-Half Tatami Sliding Door* (*Yojōhan fusuma no ura-bari*).

183 Interviewed in the Channel 4 TV documentary *Mondo Macabro*.

184 Johnson, William. "A New View of Porn: The Films of Tatsumi Kumashiro". *Film Quarterly*. Volume 57, Issue 1, 2003. pg 11-19. The comment is cited in the footnotes from a speech given at the Japan Society, New York City, 21 March, 2001, in which the woman script supervisor Akane Shiratori who worked at Nikkatsu at the same time as Kumashiro, quotes the director.

あの手この手の裏表の具合わせ
世にもまれな色あがり

オールカラー 成人映画

秘女郎市場

片桐夕子・山口明美・アベ 聖・高山千草・森 和美・加納愛子・城 新子・益富信孝・五條 博

日活ロマンポルノ

日活

オールカラー 成人映画

色替女浮世絵師

白く肌を朱に染めて……にぎった絵筆に
女があえぐハッ息のむ愛欲絵図!!

脚本・新聞次郎
監督・曾根中生

前森 綾 福 小
野 巖 島 川
霜 正 む 節
一郎 子 お 子
神久 堺 島
山 達 村
利 紀 謙 武
勝 三 子 次 門

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感じんです

原作 泉大八 (シブヤック)

若さに光るよジュンの裸身——涙にうるむジュンの瞳——
ジュンのなかでエロさがめぐる……
本編とオマケの二部作
フル・セクセンのハート・ソング

泉 じゅん

五影 小 堀 経 岡 水
保 山 太 本 沢 城
美 三 長 藤 柳
博 俊 樹 久 利 子 薫 う

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オールカラー 成人映画

脚本・監督 神代辰巳

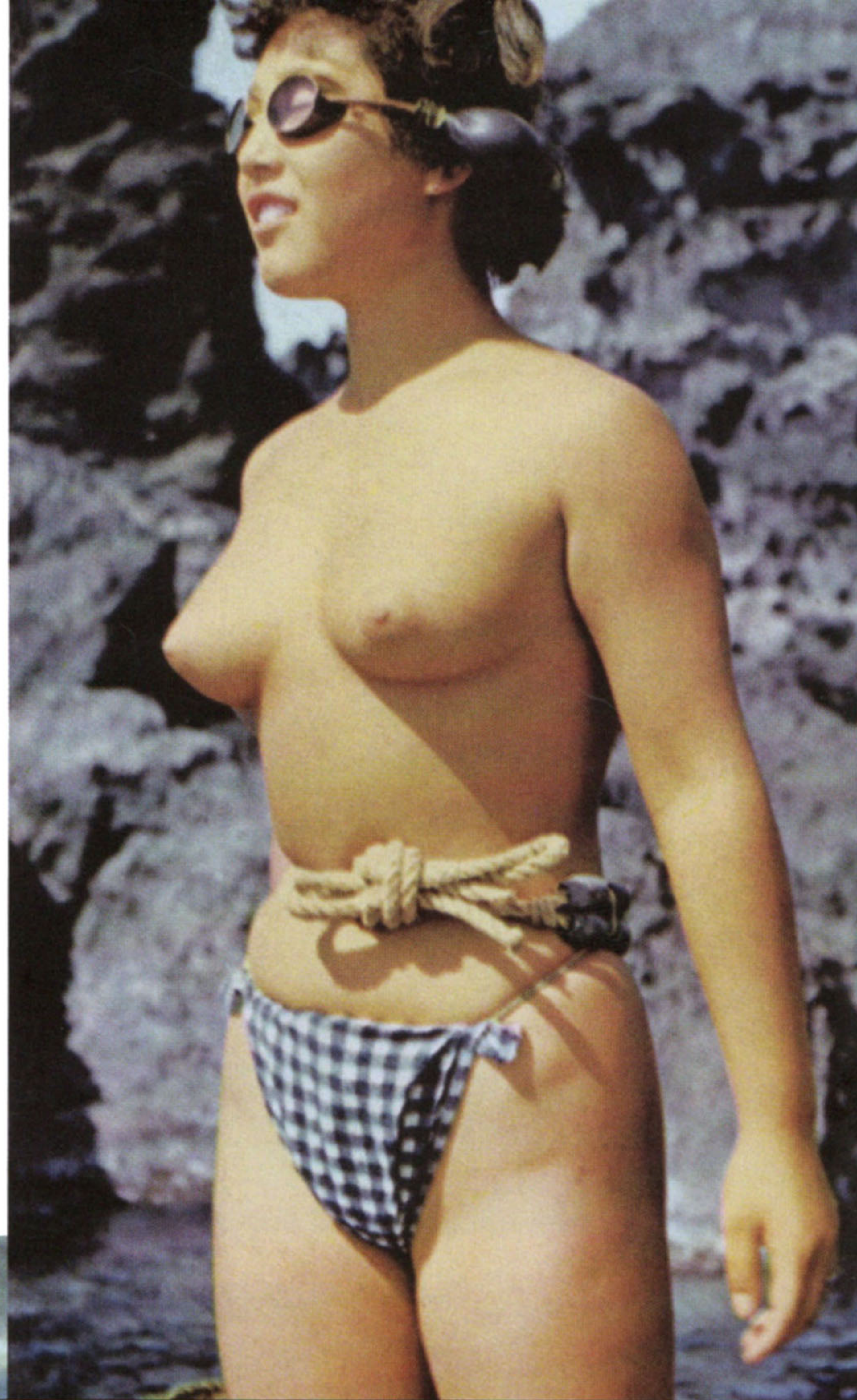
四畳半襖の裏張り

「あれ! どうぞ、どうぞ……」
千々に乱れし蚊張のうち

幻の永井文子と喧嘩されて数十年、その真実を暴くすぶるノスタルジックな風情が

富 下 順 子
宮 沢 保 美
山 崎 英 子
江 角 初 美
山 崎 初 男

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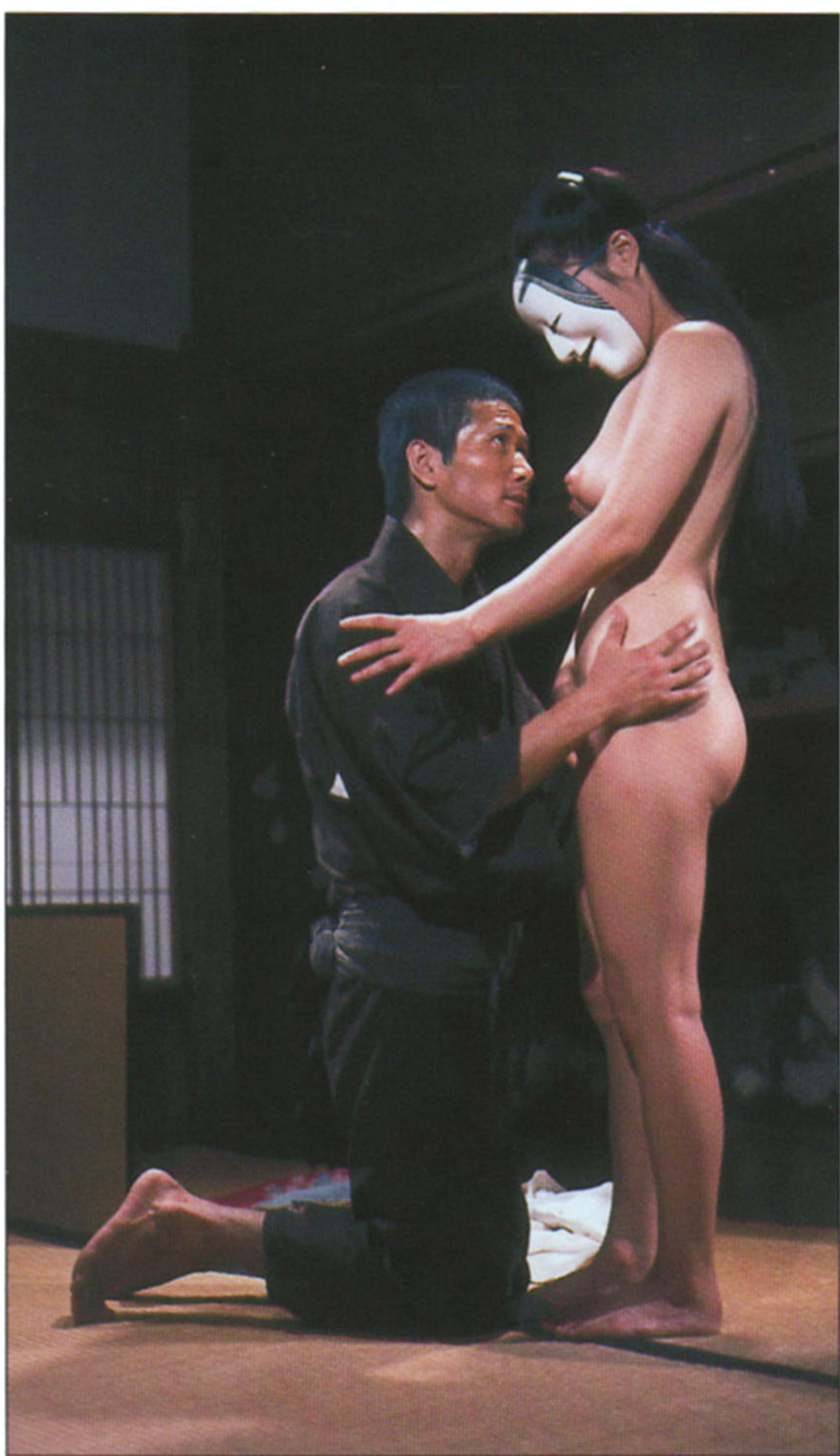
above: Japan 'in the raw': *Violated Paradise*. (1963) (bottom right).

©Something Weird Video

top left: Atsushi Fujiura's last gasp from a forgotten genre, the 1985 production *Mighty Ama: Tightly-Closed Shell*. ©Nikkatsu Corporation

left and top right: Flesh & fantasy: real-life ama in Marion Gering's 1963 behind-the-scenes exposé on the sensuous orient, *Violated Paradise*. ©Something Weird Video

opposite: Ama Glamour: Atsushi Fujiura was the undoubted king of this obscure Nikkatsu sub-genre, with films including *Lusty Ama: Loincloth Festival* (1981) (top left) and *Marked Ama: Stirred-Up Shell* (1982) (bottom left). Other titles in the unofficial series include Saburô Endô's *Lusty Ama: Stirred-Up Pot* (1976) (top right) and Shinichi Shiratori's *Clam-Diving Ama* (1979) (bottom right). ©Nikkatsu Corporation



above: Slashed by the censors: Chiyo Aoi in one of the "short series of bath-tub scenes" left remaining in Tetsuji Takechi's homage to Junichirô Tanizaki's *Dream of the Red Chamber* (1964). ©Daisan Pro
left: Just say Noh: Naomi Tani: *Tied Up!*, made in 1977 by Mamoru Watanabe. ©Shintohe
below: Hideko Kawaguchi flanked by Mina Yanagi and Chiyo Aoi in a promo shot for Takechi's *Dream of the Red Chamber* (1964). ©Daisan Pro
opposite: Mina Yanagi and Chiyo Aoi in Takechi's colourful *Dream of the Red Chamber* (1964). ©Daisan Pro
opposite inset bottom left: Original ad mat for *Dream of the Red Chamber*.





奔放な夢幻の世界……五色に彩られた妖しくも美しい女の肌！

天然色

紅閨夢

監督 武智鉄二

谷崎潤一郎作「過酸化マンガン水の夢」より

柳 美那
葵 千代
後山 子之丞
奈良 陽吉
花川 蘭子
川口 秀子

松竹映画

第三プロダクション製作・松竹配給



above: Document: Pervert Woman's Onsen Peeping (1975), one of Shinya Yamamoto's many films set in the woman's bathhouse.

this page and opposite: More period ero guro from Tetsuji Takechi, Floating World Cruelty Story (1968) ©Takechi Pro



浮世絵残酷物語

カラー作品



浮世絵残酷物語

映倫



top: The title says it all: Naomi Oka strung up by Shirô Shimomoto in Banmei Takahashi's *That Female Teacher: Tightly Bound* (1978). ©Shintoho

above: Kazuko Shirakawa graces the poster of Nikkatsu's first ever Roman Porno, *Apartment Wife: Afternoon Affair* (1971). ©Nikkatsu Corporation

right: In the docks for obscenity: Seiichirô Yamaguchi's *Love Hunter* (1972), starring Hidemi Hara. ©Nikkatsu Corporation





this page: Set in the Taisho era, Noboru Tanaka's sumptuous festival of cruelty, *From the Banned Book "Wild Dance of a Beautiful Woman": Torture!* (1977), depicts the relationship between the pioneering writer, photographer and *shibari* artist Seiu Itô (1882-1961), played by Hatsuo Yamaya, and the prostitute Tae, played by Junko Miyashita. Unlike *pinku eiga* filmmakers, Nikkatsu had far greater resources at its disposal for its bigger-budget Roman Porno productions, including proper studio sets such as the one depicted in this rare on-set production still (**top right**).
©Nikkatsu Corporation



EXCLUSIVAMENTE PARA MAYORES DE 18 AÑOS CLASIFICADA «S»

EL IMPERIO DEL SEXO

MIKI SUGIMOTO • SANDRA JULIEN

DIRECTOR: NAOBUMI SUZUKI • EASTMANCOLOR



映
赤い画面に描かれていて、男と女は、女が男を、徳川セックスを、

女狂いの殿様が思いついたり、
世にもおかしな閨房禁止令

カラー作品

成人映画
企画・天尾完次 脚本・橋本昌男 絵本・鈴木則文 撮影・増田敏雄

監督・鈴木則文

池島ルリ子
三原葉子
水城ゆう子
衣城麻子
成瀬正孝
京崎和子
鳳城子
平参平
岡八郎
大泉滉
山城新伍
殿山泰三
渡辺文雄

杉本美樹

サンドラ・ジュリアン

色情大名

徳川セックス禁止令

TELEMONDIAL présente

GIRL BOSS

LES ETUDIANTES
EN CAVALÈE

Dirigé par NAKAJIMA Sadao

avec SUGIMOTO MIKI

EN COULEURS

above: French poster for the Toei Pinky Violence classic *Girl Boss: Reform School Breakout* (1973), featuring Miki Sugimoto.

opposite top: Spanish (left) and Japanese (right) posters for Norifumi Suzuki's 1972 production *The Insatiable*, with Sandra Jullien, one of the most widely seen Japanese sex films of the '70s.

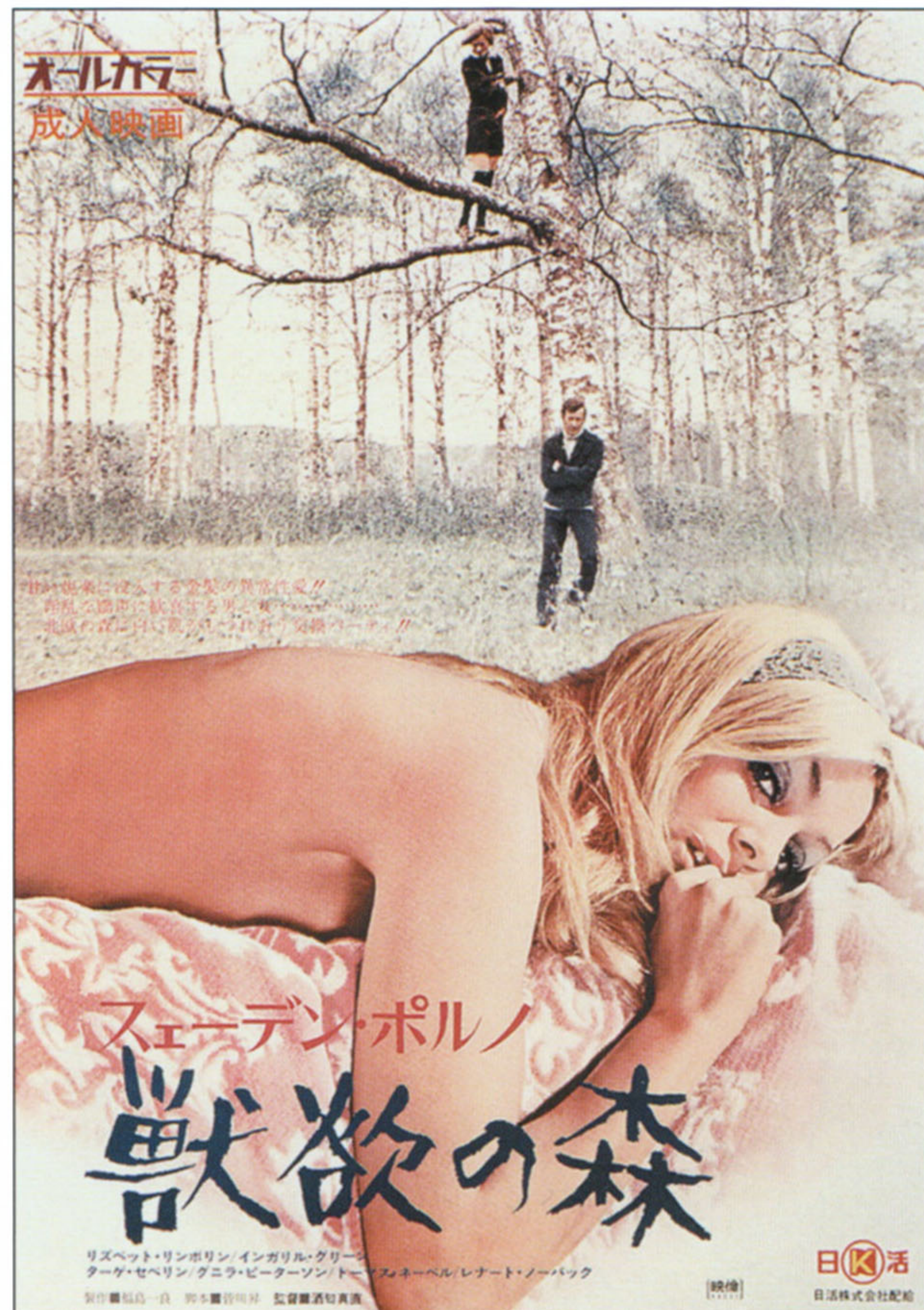
opposite bottom: Oriental orientalism from Shûji Terayama and Anatole Dauman: Isabelle Illiers is the caged bird in *Fruits of Passion*. ©1981, Argos Films – Terayama Productions



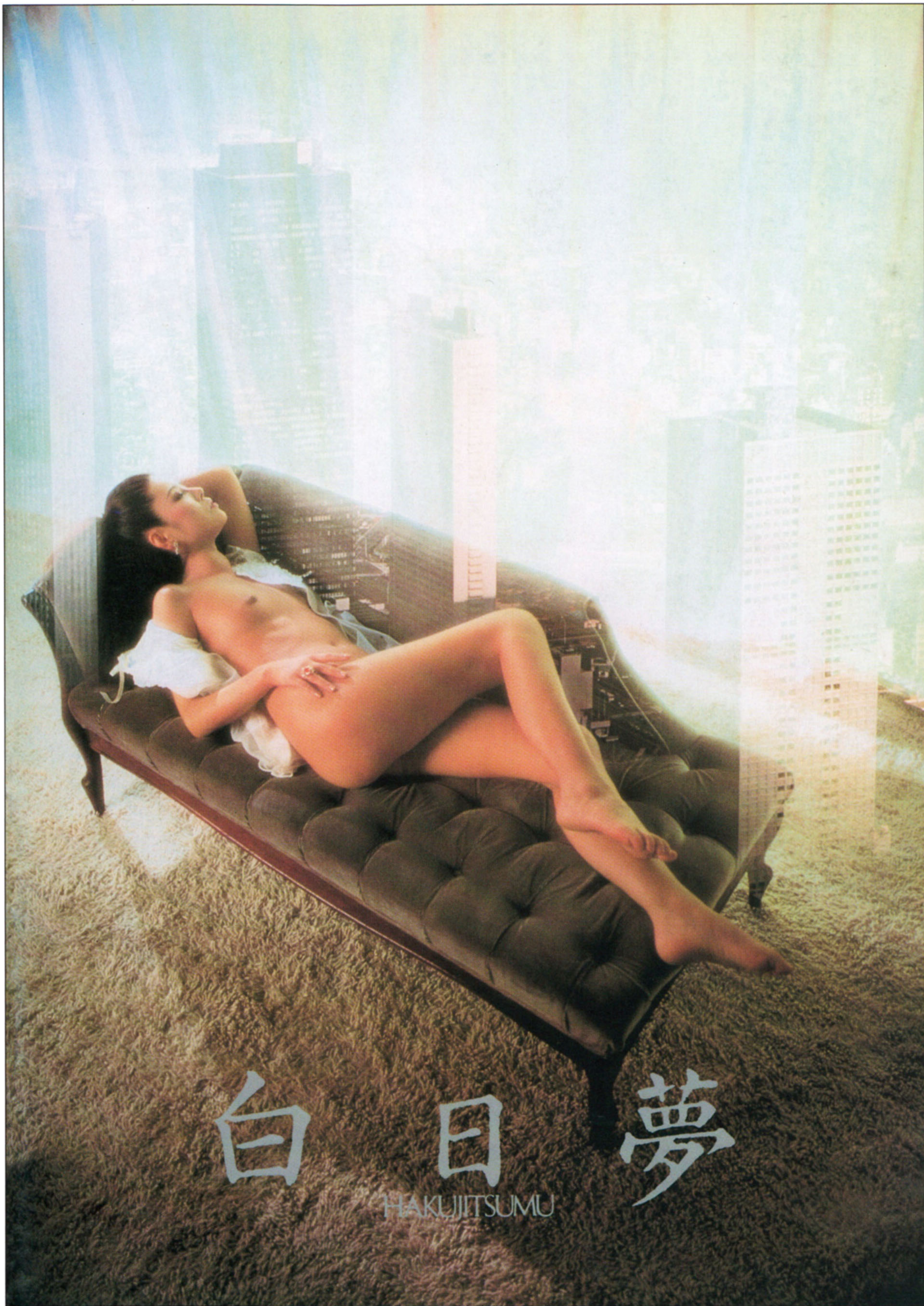
above: French poster for Akitaka Kimata's *Human Flesh Market* (1969), a surprisingly well-travelled early pink film.

opposite top: Looking West: Masuo Ikeda tried circumventing the censors by heading to Greece for *Dedicated to the Aegean Sea* (1979) (left), while Sakô Sakawa contributed to Nikkatsu's little-known *Sweden Porno* line with *Forest of Beastly Desire*. (1971) (right). ©Nikkatsu Corporation

opposite bottom: Naomi Oka finds married life a bind in *Apartment Wife Bondage* (1980). ©Shintoho







above: Japan's first hardcore star, Kyôko Aizome, sprawls out in this publicity pic for Tetsuji Takechi's '80s remake of *Daydream*. ©Takechi Pro

opposite: Scenes from Mamoru Watanabe's *Apartment Wife Bondage* (1980): Naomi Oka submits to her husband's strange hobbies (**top**), before escaping to a love hotel with the man next door, Ren Ôsugi (**bottom**). ©Shintocho





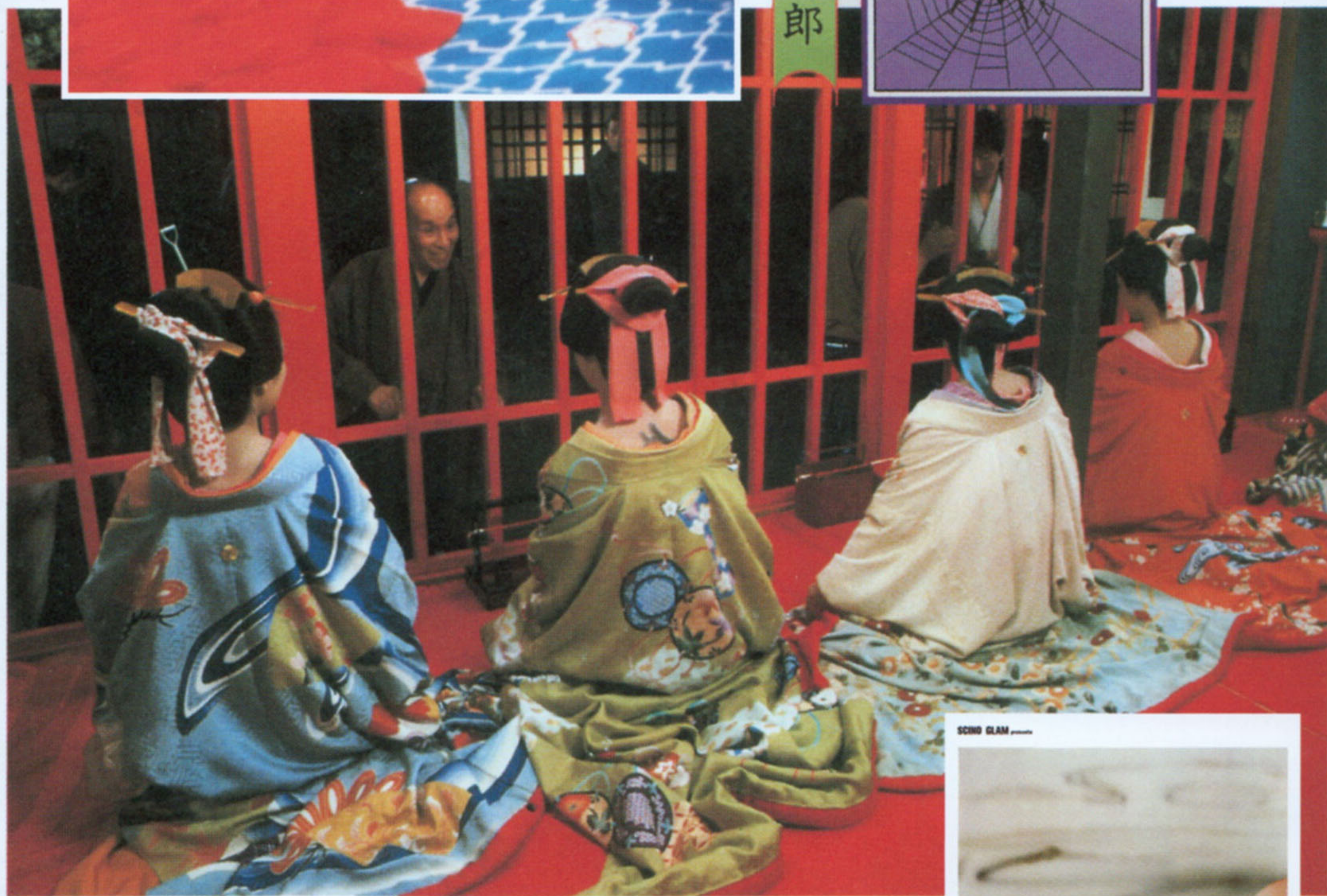
武智鉄二監督作品＊原作・谷崎潤一郎

華

あゝ

魁

Directed by TETSUJI TAKECHI
OIRAN



SCINO GLAM presents



LA FURIA DEI SENSI

(DAYDREAM)

con KEI SATO • KYOKO AIZOME • TAKEMI KATSUSHIKA
scritto da KEI SATO e SUNICHIRO TANIZAKI diretto da TETSUJI TAKECHI
prodotto da TOSHIYUKI IIDA • ARIYUKI MAEDA
distribuito dalla Central Film EASTMANCOLOR

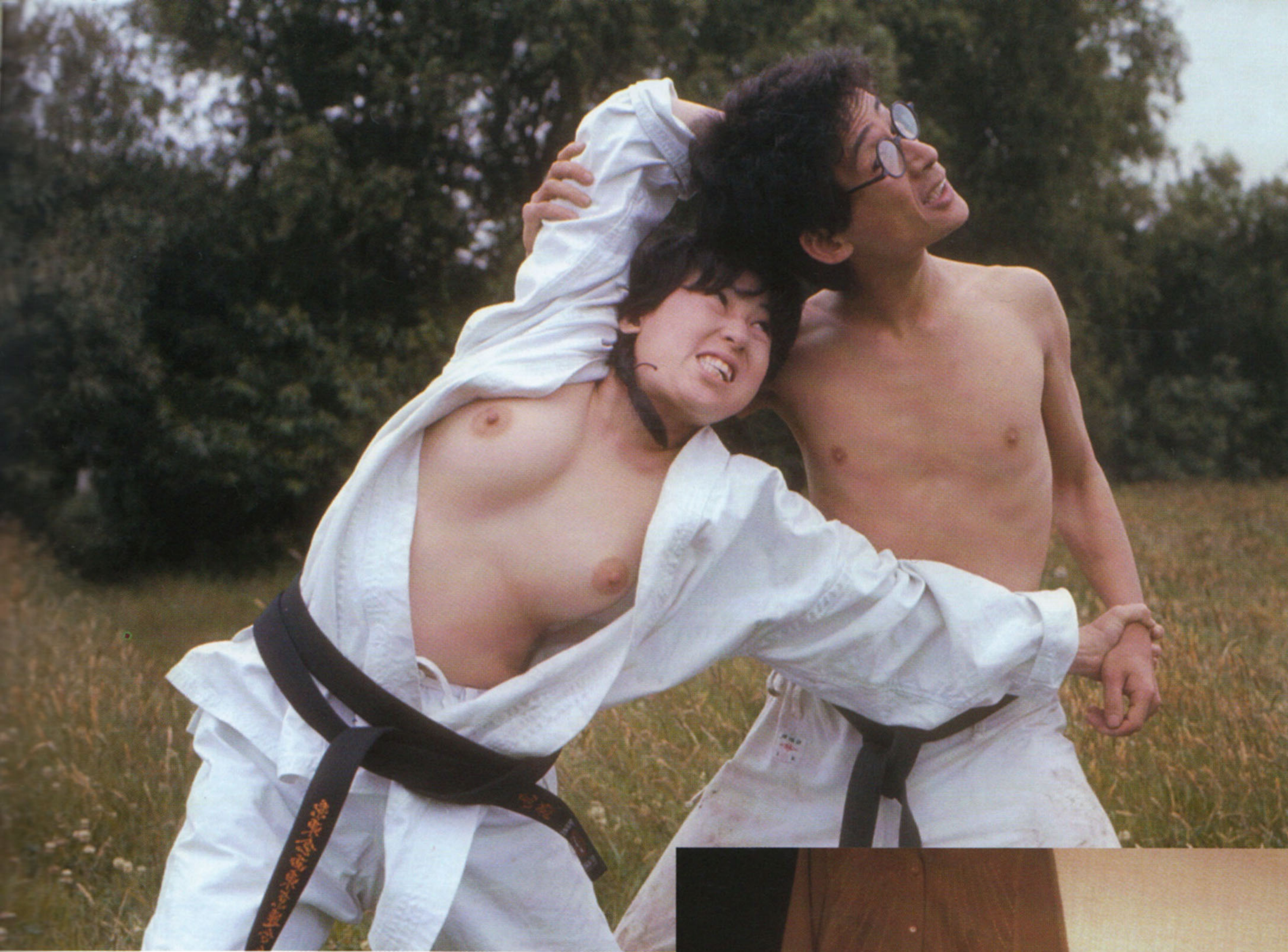
opposite:
Kyôko Aizome falls prey to Kei Satô in *Daydream* (1981). ©Takechi Pro

this page, above:
More highbrow erotica from Tetsuji Takechi in *Oiran* (1983). ©Takechi Pro

this page, right:
Italian poster for Takechi's widely-exported hardcore *Daydream* remake.







opposite top: Yôta Kawase grapples with Yumeka Sasaki in Shinji Imaoka's *Molester Train: Benten's Butt* (1998).
©Shintoho

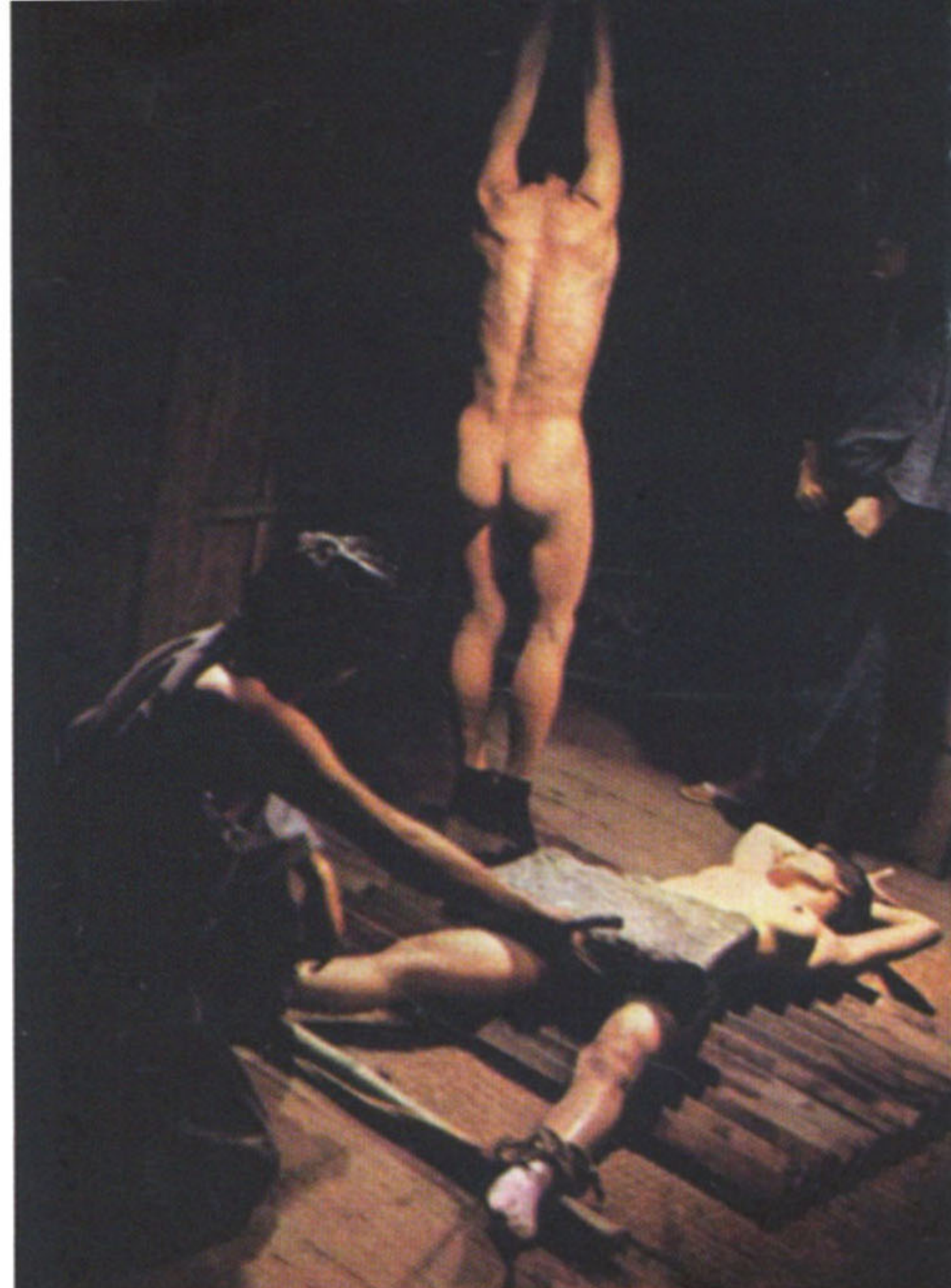
opposite bottom: More conventional pleasures in the same film, which is also known under its director's title, *Demeking*.
©Shintoho

top: *Molester Judo Squad* (1977), a prime example of Shinya Yamamoto's comic approach to the sex film.
©Shintoho

above: *Molester Assault Bus: Put Through* (1998), one of the many pink films to make use of Japan's efficient public transport system.
©OP Eiga

right: More bawdy games from Yamamoto in *Molester Physical Examination* (1977).
©Shintoho





opposite: More scenes Tarô Araki's *Molester Assault Bus*. ©OP Eiga

above: Classic Roman Porno posters for Chûsei Sone's *High School Coed: Angel Guts* (1978) (top) and Kôyû Ohara's *Oh! Takarazuka* (1982) (bottom). ©Nikkatsu Corporation

right, top to bottom: Scenes from Kôji Wakamatsu's *Hundred Year Torture Chronicle* (1975). ©Shintoho



top: *Serial Rape* (1983) provides an early screen outing for Ren Ôsugi in the days before his discovery by Takeshi Kitano. ©Shintoho

above: One of Roman Porno's most incendiary titles: Kôyû Ohara's *White Rose Campus: And Then Everyone Gets Raped...* ©Nikkatsu Corporation

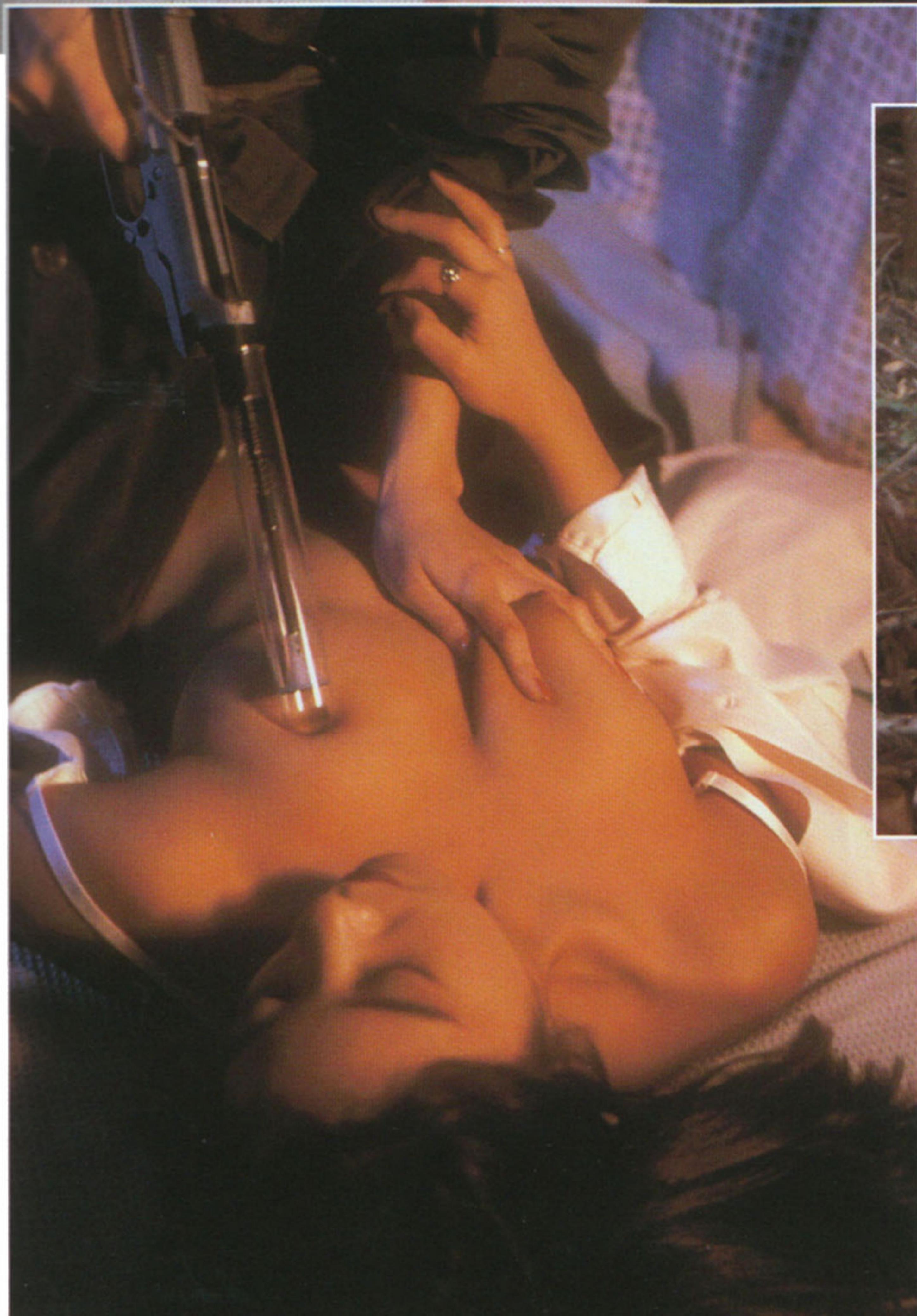
right: *Virgin Binding* (1978), a typical Mamoru Watanabe title from the period, scripted by Banmei Takahashi. ©Shintoho

opposite: Mayuko Hino is assailed in Mamoru Watanabe's surprisingly poetic bondage drama *Virgin Rope Makeover*. ©Shintoho

opposite inset: Two classics from the harder end of the Roman Porno line, Yasuharu Hasebe's *Rape: The 13th Hour* (**top**) and Masaru Konuma's *Flower and Snake* (**bottom**). ©Nikkatsu Corporation







opposite top: Visions of ecstasy: Kyôko Natsume in Daisuke Gotô's *Married Couple Swap Night: My Wife and Your Husband* (2004). ©Shinto

opposite bottom: Lemon Hanazawa goes pubic in a publicity still for Akira Fukamachi's *Married Woman, OL, Beautiful Girl Lineage: Blissful Apartment* (2004). ©Shinto

top: Yumika Hayashi in Shinji Imaoka's *Mature Woman: Rutting Ball-Play* (2004), better known by its non-pink title *Lunch Box*. ©Kokuei/Shinto

above: Al fresco romance between Kazuhiro Sano and Kanako Kishi in *Don't Let It Bring You Down* (1993). ©Kokuei / Shinto

left: A characteristically striking image from one of Hisayasu Satô's urban nightmares, *Silencer Made of Glass* (1991). ©Shinto



above:

Yumeka Sasaki bares all in Takahisa Zeze's post-modern ode for the new millennium *Tokyo X Erotica* (2001).
© Kokuei/Shintoho

right:

A soapy scene between Takeshi Itô and Saki Kurihara in Zeze's *Dream of Garuda* (1994).
© Kokuei/Shintoho

opposite:

Mitsuru Meike's *The Glamorous Life of Sachiko Hanai*, the pink genre's breakout hit of 2004.

opposite top:

Emi Kuroda's idiot-savant makes her memorable first trip to a library.
© Kokuei/Shintoho

opposite middle left:

"These people live in caves": Our eponymous heroine with Takeshi Itô's North Korean spy.
© Kokuei/Shintoho

opposite bottom left:

Lost in thought.
© Kokuei/Shintoho

opposite bottom right:

International poster art.
© Kokuei/Shintoho





The Glamorous Life of Sachiko Hanai 花井さちこの華麗な生涯
~International Version~
International Version
<English Subtitle>

2004/09/18 (Sat) 18:00 Japan Kikaku Co., Ltd. production Kikaku, Shin-to-ho, V theater 131 presents
Emi Kanda Takashi Ito Yukiko Matsuo Kyoko Nagano Tetsushi Matsumae
Music by Taro Kikuchi Director of photography by Hiroshi Ito Screenplay by Takao Nakano Directed by Mitsuru Miki
女池克監督作品 脚本：中野真知 黒田工三 伊藤猛 松岡文雄 松江明彦 渡辺中子子 製作・配給：国際映画公社 新東宝映画株式会社 製作協力：Vシネマ 135 配給事業 インターフィルム

(R-18)





top: Together again: Yôta Kawase and Yumeka Sasaki in Mitsuru Meike's poignant drama *Secondhand Love* (2000). ©Kokuei/Shintoho

above: Mayu Asada peeks beneath the bed in Takuaki Hashiguchi's erotic take on a traditional ghost story, *The Slit-Mouthed Woman* (2005). ©Shintoho

left: Uncle Takashi leaves his mark on Minami Aoyama in Shinji Imaoka's *Uncle's Paradise* (2006). ©Kokuei/Shintoho

opposite top: Emi Kuroda and Yukijirô Hotaru quote Noam Chomsky in *The Glamorous Life of Sachiko Hanai* (2004). ©Kokuei/Shintoho

opposite bottom: Total invasion: Sachiko Hanai meets the President in *The Glamorous Life of Sachiko Hanai*. ©Kokuei/Shintoho





top: An early role for one of the pink genre's most enduring actors, Shirô Shimomoto, alongside Mako Kitano in Banmei Takahashi's *Nip in the Bud* (1977). ©Shintoho

above: The simple pleasures of Sakae Nitta's *Pantyless Tour Conductor: I Want to Handle You* (2004). ©Xces Film

middle left: Rinako Hirasawa in Yûji Tajiri's *The Strange Saga of Hiroshi the Freeloading Sex Machine* (2006). ©Kokuei/Shintoho

left: Natascha Tagirov adds a touch of exoticness to Futoshi Sakamoto's *The Temptation of White Skin: Russian Widow* (2004). ©Xces Film

opposite top: Hisayasu Satô's *Poaching by the Water's Edge* (1990), better known by its original title, *Horse and Woman and Dog*. ©Shintoho

opposite bottom: *Mansion of the Senses: Wife's Ascension* (2004), Takuaki Hashiguchi's pinku eiga homage to *The Grudge*. ©Shintoho



top: Nagisa Ōshima's renowned French co-productions with Anatole Dauman.
Eiko Matsuda, as the infamous *femme castratrice* Sada Abe, lovingly throttles
Tatsuya Fuji at the climax of *In the Realm of the Senses*.
©1976, Argos Films / Oshima Productions

bottom: A scene from *Empire of Passion*, starring Tatsuya Fuji and Kazuko Yoshiyuki.
©1978, Argos Films / Oshima Productions

Eros International

When Mitsuru Meike's *The Glamorous Life of Sachiko Hanai* opened in New York's Cinema Village theatre on 13 April, 2007, many assumed that it was the first ever Japanese pink film in history to get a theatrical release in the US. On the face of it, it seemed a reasonable enough supposition. However, it doesn't take much research to discover that such films have been crossing waters to play in theatres overseas ever since the *eroduction's* conception, and not only in America. Moreover, Japanese directors had been travelling abroad to make films, as well as making use of foreign performers in films made at home, almost since day one. Japanese sex films were never as insular as one might assume.

It perhaps scarcely needs emphasising that eroticism has been a large part of the appeal of Japanese cinema for Westerners. The allure of the Orient has clearly been a crucial selling point for arthouse releases from *Rashomon* and *Ugetsu* onwards, with distributors and trade papers in the '60s quick to draw attention to the more earthy qualities of films like *Onibaba* (1964), *Woman in the Dunes* (1964), and *Manji* (1964, Yasuzô Masumura's melodramatic adaptation of Junichirô Tanizaki's story of a bored housewife who develops a Sapphic fixation on a fellow student at an evening art class). Concurrent with all of this however, there was another side to Japanese cinema, more honest about its intentions, that passed all but unnoticed beneath the eyes of film critics and reporters, but one familiar to those frequenting the grindhouses of New York's 42nd Street, the sex clubs of London's Soho, and the porno theatres of Paris's Pigalle.

In *Pinku Eiga Hakusho* (Pink Film White Paper), *Kinema Junpô* magazine's 1969 special issue looking in detail at Japan's burgeoning early *eroduction* market, there's a chapter written by Keizô Yamada entitled 'They Say They're Also Exported Overseas',¹⁸⁵ which lists exactly what titles went to which countries in a given year. The results make for fascinating reading. For instance, one learns that from as early as 1965, a whole host of movies were being sold to territories as diverse as America, Canada, West Germany, Holland, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark, Luxembourg, Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Columbia, Venezuela, Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Cambodia and high schoolnawa (then under American protection, until it was returned to Japan in 1972). These include many long-forgotten titles from long-forgotten directors, like Kei Miyaguchi's *Adulteress* (1965) for Kantô Movie, Tamizô Shibuya's *Dirty Company Executive* (1965) for Cine Unimonde, and Jirô Tsurumaki's *Soft Skin Penitence*

(1966) for Miyanishi Production. Some of the early titles mentioned as being exported to Britain include Ôkura Eiga's *Desires of an Abnormal Man* (1966) and *Forbidden Garden* (1967), both directed by Kinya Ogawa, and Kôji Wakamatsu's *Japan Assault Dark History: Blood of an Abnormal Man* and *Sexual Wanderings* (both 1967).

Without thoroughly checking local sources, it is less clear to the modern researcher exactly what happened to the films after they were sold to these respective countries and what the reactions of audiences there were to them. The history of film is inseparable from the history of film distribution and film reporting: where a given title was shown, who saw it and, more importantly, who wrote about it and catalogued its passing – these are at least as important as a film's contents. For the most part the movies under discussion here were circulated in the kind of grimy adult theatres that fell well outside the scope of major international film journals like *Variety* or the review sections of the daily newspapers, and so film history effectively denied their existence.

Perhaps understandably, though still lazily, scholars in the English language have had a habit of automatically looking towards America to assess the permeation of a nation's film product into international markets. When claims are made that a film has never been released in the West, what is often meant is that a film has never been screened in America before. One person eager to redress this imbalance towards English-language sources has been Roland Domenig of the University of Vienna, who has interestingly pointed out that many significant titles seem to have been sold to West Germany before, if ever, they were released to American markets.¹⁸⁶ This includes genuinely important landmarks of Japanese cinema history, and a very large number of pink films. For example, while the American Film Institute of Motion Pictures Catalogue lists Tetsuji Takechi's first film, *Women...Oh Women!*, as opening in Los Angeles on 18 September, 1964, the film had already been released in Germany on 6 March, 1964, as *Frauen unter nackter Sonne* (*Alle Frauen Japans*). Kôji Wakamatsu's *Secret Acts Behind Walls* received its international debut at the Berlin Film Festival in 1965, and went on to a wider release on 30 December, 1966. Other Wakamatsu films distributed in Germany at this time included *The Sun Is Redder Than Blood* (released on 27 December, 1967 as *Akamoru – das dunkle, wilde Begehren*) and *The Notorious Concubines* (as *Kin Ping Meh – Chinesischer Liebesreigen*, on 27 June, 1969). A number of the films of Kan Mukai (in those days his first name was written in non-Japanese sources under its alternative reading

of Hiroshi), including *Flesh* (1965, German release on 14 May, 1965 as *Nacktes Fleisch*) and *Assault Young Girl Diary: Female* (1968, German release on 20 March, 1970 as *Lustvoll eine Schlange streicheln*) were also shown in German sex cinemas, as was Shinya Yamamoto's *Sexy Diary* (1965, Germany release on 25 May, 1967 as *Ungezähmte Erotik*).¹⁸⁷

Though the information about releases in other countries is not always as easily accessible as it is in Germany, I think it is safe to assume a similar pattern across much of Western Europe, although it is necessary to look pretty hard through local sources to find out what played where. In Britain, the online version of the *BFI Film & TV Database* has a small selection of titles. However, the information about them is patchy, giving no indication about distributors or domestic release dates and thus leaving one uncertain of whether the film in question was actually shown in the country or not. We know from *Pinku Eiga Hakusho*, for example, that a number of Kinya Ogawa's films were exported to the UK, but this director's name is not listed in the database at all.¹⁸⁸

Perusing contemporary paper sources proves a little more fruitful. During the late '60s/early '70s, London's *Time Out* ran a section entitled 'Film Voyeur' within their cinema section, which listed what was screening in London's euphemistically-termed 'Film Clubs' – cinemas which exploited a loophole in the law in order to show non-certificated sex films in a members-only environment. The listings never mentioned the original Japanese titles, and when directors or casts were credited, names were often misspelt. One has to cross-check cast credits in the substantial filmography of Tan lida to deduce that the film entitled *Portrait of Passion* attributed to this name (spelt Tan Ida), that regularly played in a dubbed version at the Stockwell Tatler cinema in 1971, was probably a 1968 film produced by Aoyama Pro and distributed in Japan by Nikkatsu, whose original title translates as *Secret Notebook: Female Storybook of the Floating World*. In other cases it is not such a complicated business making the identification, as for example with the listing the same year for Kan Mukai's *Flesh*, advising us that this is not the Andy Warhol film of the same name starring Joe Dallesandro, but in fact a film from Kokuei featuring "three stories depicted in an omnibus manner about a wife, a coed and a streetwalker".¹⁸⁹ Then there's Takechi's *Black Snow*, which received a special mention in *Time Out*'s pages when it played at the same adult cinema, seemingly the place to go in the UK in 1971 for those with a taste for Japanese sex films.¹⁹⁰ The British Film Institute database does list Mukai's film (misspelling his name as NUKAI, Hiroshi), citing the same export title as that used in Germany – *Naked Flesh* – and giving this synopsis: "Episode film. A VIRGIN: student discovers that a girl who boasts of amorous exploits is really a virgin: situation is promptly rectified. A WOMAN: impotent

husband attempts cure by watching wife & house-guest making love. A PROSTITUTE: attempted rape of prostitute by her pimp."¹⁹¹ Neither the title nor the director of *Black Snow* are listed however, giving a good indication of the piecemeal information available about what played where and when in British film clubs during this period.

Another good source of information for those researching what British viewers of this kind of film might have been aware of, even if they hadn't seen the works in question, is *Continental Film Review*, a monthly magazine that ran from 1952 until 1984, by which time it had changed its name to *Continental Film & Video Review*. 'Continental' was a byword in the UK for the new strain of saucy fare that emerged on the European mainland in the mid-'50s, and the magazine's main lure was its lavish photo spreads of scantily-clad glamour girls from across the continent; initially Brigitte Bardot, Gina Lollobrigida, Claudia Cardinale and their ilk, and later the Edwige Fenechs, Sylvia Kristels and Laura Gemser of the day. Though considered something of a joke in film circles, in hindsight the magazine arguably gives a more revealing picture of the nation's viewing habits, and what was keeping the country's film exhibitors afloat, than the British Film Institute's then rather highbrow and esoteric journal *Monthly Film Bulletin* (eventually merged with the still-running *Sight and Sound*). *Continental Film Review*'s contents charted the downward spiral that categorised much of the European film industry, to the extent that in its final days it was little better than a soft porn magazine.

At the beginning, at least, *Continental Film Review*'s attitude to cinema across the world was adventurous and wide-reaching, and its pages presented an image of arthouse cinema sub-culture at its most diverse and electrifying; an era that the modern viewer can only look back and dream of. Taking 1962 alone as a sample year, between the adverts for films like Roger Vadim's *Les liaisons dangereuses* (complete with the *Daily Express*'s endorsement that, "It makes the sizzling Italian *La dolce vita* seem as stately as a minuet"), François Truffaut's *Jules and Jim*, and various examples of the nature camp films then prevalent, like *Naked As Nature Intended* and *World Without Shame*, there are interviews with Jean Renoir and Claude Chabrol, festival reports from Cannes and Karlovy Vary, articles on Joseph Losey and Kenji Mizoguchi, and close looks at the new currents in Polish, German, Bulgarian and Soviet cinema and Yugoslavian animation. On the Japanese side of things a round-up of 'Murder Abroad: Delectable Corpus Delecti'¹⁹² featured Shinto's *The Nude Model Murder Case*, and Teruo Ishii's *Invisible Black Hands* and *Call Girl Territory* (illustrated with stills of a semi-naked Yôko Mihara) alongside other European titles like Eugenio Martin's *The Hypnotist* and Julio Coll's *A Dress Rehearsal for Death*. 'The New Japan'¹⁹³ introduced Susumu Hani, Shôhei Imamura and Nagisa



above: Hideo Sekigawa's *Himo*, a little-known Toei title from 1965, released in Britain by Gala as *The Procurer*.

Ôshima to British readers, while 'Japan: Land of Contrasts'¹⁹⁴ summarised trends in film attendances vis-à-vis television's permeation while cross-referencing a number of new works from the major studios, concluding that, "while now there seems to be a less pronounced stress on sex (the natural beauty of the Japanese women being accepted as attraction enough), there continues to be violence and gangsterdom in a large proportion of productions." (Note that this comment comes from just before the beginning of the *eroduction*.)

Fast-forwarding through the decade, and in 1969 alone one can read the articles 'Eroticism in the Japanese Cinema',¹⁹⁵ a feature on Nagisa Ôshima,¹⁹⁶ and a special on Teruo Ishii's *Tokugawa onna-keizu*, here referred to as *The Orgies of Edo*.¹⁹⁷ In 1972, 'Censorship and Sex: Confrontation in Japan' reported the new tidal wave of sex films and the police action against Nikkatsu, concluding that, "Japan's absence from the major festivals is also significant and indicates either a reluctance on the part of producers to send films or on the part of the selection committees to accept them."¹⁹⁸ In 1973, with the dearth of any reportage on Japanese cinema in most other sources, the magazine's editors reappraised the country's contribution to contemporary world cinema with the announcement of Sandra Jullien's outing in Norifumi Suzuki's new sex drama *The Insatiable*¹⁹⁹ and

a selection of racy stills from Nikkatsu's recent Roman Porno releases,²⁰⁰ with a special focus on *Castle Orgies* and *Yûko's White Breasts*.²⁰¹

Continental Film Review's setting of Japanese cinema alongside European productions is enlightening. Whether many of the films it covered in these articles cited above were ever released in Britain is unclear from the sources available. What is obvious is that Japanese films were not only marketed and sold as something non-mainstream, but mainly under this 'Continental/Arthouse' label, which as the '60s turned into the '70s, was pretty much synonymous with smut. Forgotten among the higher profile retrospectives or releases of the films of Akira Kurosawa and Yasujiro Ozu, organised by the likes of the National Film Theatre, there were a host of titles originally handled by smaller companies like Gala Film Distributors, established in 1953 by Kenneth Rive (the company still operates, although its founder died in 2002). Gala were responsible for introducing many renowned international arthouse hits to the UK during this era, from countries like France, Russia, Italy, and West Germany, and took over a number of cinemas across the UK in the early 1960s, including its flagship Gala Royal Cinema in Paddington, London. The company was obviously not immune to market trends, and so this premier venue, echoing British tastes in foreign cinema throughout the next decade, went the same way as many such



above: The kind of Japanese film the British were exposed to in the early '60s: Tetsurô Ôno's *Youth in Fury* (1960), produced by Shochiku and sold overseas at a time when the company's line was that Ozu's films were "too Japanese" for foreign consumption.

establishments, as "towards the end of its life it went over to playing more saucy sex romps and it closed on 16 November, 1979 with *When Girls Go to Bed* and *Ups and Downs of Girls on Holiday*."²⁰²

None of the Japanese films that there is evidence of Gala having released (in the form of contemporary ad material) actually came from the *eroduction* production sector, it is true. Most of them were major studio releases, made at the time before these independent producers had started selling their films overseas and when the *taiyôzoku* was still considered a safe bet with the general public. But they were certainly aimed at this end of the market, and no doubt primed UK audiences for the likes of *Violated Angels*, *Black Snow* and inevitably Nagisa Ôshima's *In the Realm of the Senses*. It is doubtful whether anyone in Britain would have been able to tell the difference between the films of Kan Mukai produced by Kokuei released in Britain in the latter half of the '60s – titles such as *Flesh*, or *Esa* (the original UK release title, which translates as *Bait*, though the film has been released on DVD in the US as *The Bite*), in which "Young Koichi, a lad from the Tokyo slums, becomes the gigolo of rich, ageing actress Shizue, but has to pay dearly for his new life of luxury"²⁰³ – or, for example, *The Procurer*, the UK release title of an obscure Toei film from 1965, directed by Hideo Sekigawa, in which a seventeen-year-

old girl leaves home for the bright lights of Tokyo and is picked up by handsome young pimp Hiroshi and put to work for his gang. Other films introduced to UK audiences by Gala, all of which came stamped with the BBFC's enticing 'X' certificate, included a number of Shochiku productions like Keigo Kimura's *The Bath Harem* (1958), one of the brief wave of *Akasen* ('red light') films of the period set in a brothel in the immediate aftermath of the anti-prostitution law, and two re-titled works from 1960 directed by Tetsurô Ôno: *Youth in Fury*, about a school teacher troubled by juvenile delinquents; and *Girls Behind the Bars*, about teenage tearaways in a girls reform school. Sensationalism was clearly the operative word when it came to selecting their Japanese titles.

Posters, one-sheets and other ad-mats reveal that, unsurprisingly, Japanese sex films were just as popular in the rest of Europe. The major studios – especially Toei, and especially during the '70s – managed to push a number of titles into overseas territories; these included Teruo Ishii's *Shogun's Joy of Torture* (released in Germany as *Tokugawa – Gequälte Frauen*), Norifumi Suzuki's *The Insatiable* from 1972 (released in several countries, including Spain as *El imperio del sexo*) and Sadao Nakajima's 1973 Miki Sugimoto vehicle *Girl Boss: Reform School Breakout*, which went out in France as *Girl Boss – Les etudiantes en cavale*, distributed by a company called Telemondial. A poster for Akitaka Kimata's *Human Flesh Market* (1969), released as *Les esclaves du plaisir*, suggests that distributors like Alpha France, a company with its grip firmly on the adult cinema network, also handled pink films, not just the bigger-budgeted works of the major studios.



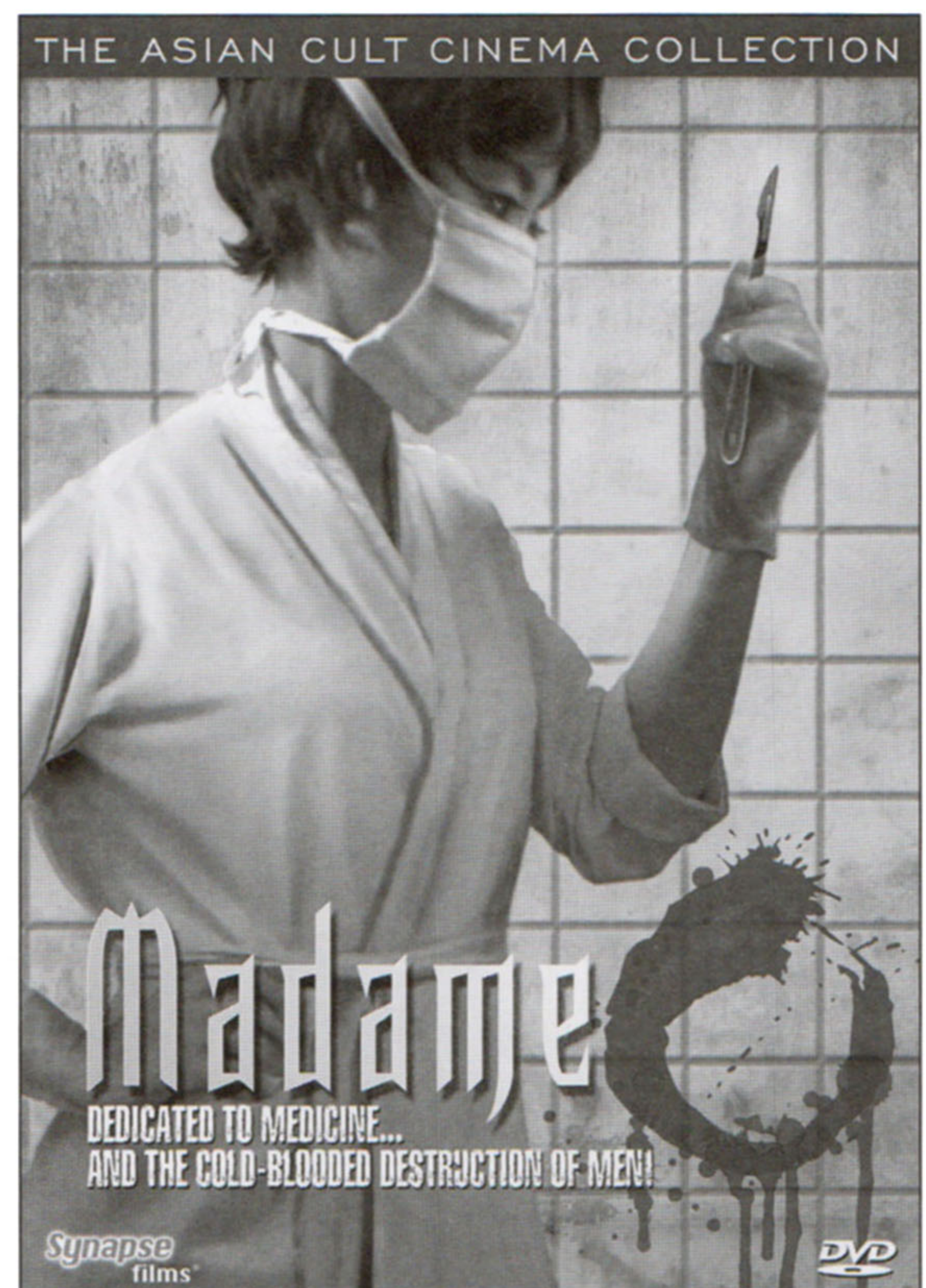
above: Images from *Human Flesh Market* (1969), an obscure *pinku eiga* produced and directed by Akitaka Kimata that found its way to French screens.

Evidence of *eroduction* releases in America are easier to come by, mainly because the distributors who handled the films have done a better job of looking after them, and so a large number of titles that haven't weathered the test of time in their country of production still survive in passable prints (though usually with burnt-in subtitles or soundtracks redubbed into English). Companies that circulated a few pink titles in the US during the '60s and '70s include exploitation mogul Harry Novak's Box Office International Pictures, and Audubon Films, the distribution company founded by Radley Metzger, one of America's original porn auteurs. Without these releases, the names of directors Toshio Okuwaki and Seiichi Fukuda would not be remembered today, nor their films *Naked Pursuit*, *Boneless* and *Madame O* (this last title, amazingly, even found itself novelized by Michael DeForrest, the head of Audubon's sister company Audubon Books, who was also responsible for writing adaptations of Metzger's films *Carmen Baby*, *Camille 2000* and *The Lickerish Quartet*). Nor would we be able to see Mamoru Watanabe's early work, *Slave Widow*. Perhaps these films, which have all been released on either DVD or VHS in America, represent the tip of the iceberg of what might still be in existence in the hands of private collectors. It does go to show however that a global network of distribution existed, despite there being little written evidence of it nowadays.

Even when the films didn't travel physically to other countries, they could make their impact on foreign audiences in other ways. We've seen how Takechi's original *Daydream* was one of the first *eroductions* to get a fairly wide release in the US, thanks to Joseph Green picking it up for distribution and adding colour full-frontal nude sequences he shot himself. Even more bizarrely, the film ended up completely remade somewhat closer to home, when the South Korean director Hyun-mok Yu shot *An Empty Dream* in 1965. In common with his earlier classic of Korean cinema, *An Aimless Bullet* (1961), *An Empty Dream* was banned by the local authorities. In this instance, the alleged offence was a very brief nude scene from its main actress Soo-jung Park. However, under South Korea's strict censorship laws at the time, the director was arrested, not for what actually appeared onscreen (the scene in question was deleted before it ever reached the public), but due to the mere fact that it had been filmed, and that the actress had been humiliated by being made to appear naked in front of a camera crew. The irony was that the prosecution was based on hearsay. Park had actually been wearing a thin flesh-coloured cat suit during the shoot.

Unlike Takechi's original, nudity was clearly not the *raison d'être* for Yu's self-conscious arthouse version of the *Daydream* scenario. What then was? Just like the *Black Snow* case in Japan, factors other than

'obscenity' were behind the prosecution; specifically the film's experimental, cryptic, non-narrative nature was considered to be insufficiently openly critical of the country's communist brothers to the north. The director was nevertheless cleared of all charges for 'personalising the monster', but charged and fined 30,000 Won for public obscenity on 15 March, 1967. Yu's film was confined to the vaults until it was finally restored and resurrected for the 2004 Puchon International Fantastic Film Festival (PIFAN).²⁰⁴ Curiously, the original source material for *An Empty Dream* provided by Takechi's film isn't mentioned anywhere in the film's credits, nor the PIFAN catalogue, but in a discussion following the screening the director acknowledged that during the '60s it was a fairly commonplace practice for Korean filmmakers to unofficially "borrow" the scenarios of Japanese films. Yu also mentioned that he had never seen Takechi's film, only the script. In truth, though the Korean film adheres to the structure of its model with an almost unerring fidelity, in terms of art direction, cinematography, montage and other related technical aspects, it is a far superior work, reminiscent of early French surrealism or German expressionism (in fact, it openly references Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*). Still, one has to wonder whether it was the only film produced in South Korea that owes its existence to what was playing in Japanese adult theatres at that time.



above: DVD cover for the Synapse release of Seiichi Fukuda's *Madame O* (1967), a film released and novelized in the States by Radley Metzger's company Audubon Films.

Back in Japan, there does appear to have been some appetite for occidental sex films and their performers, especially during the global porno explosion of the '70s. One chain dedicated to foreign *seijin eiga* was New Select, which was founded in the mid-'70s and counted Russ Meyer films like *Supervixens* (1975) and *Up!* (1976) among its initial successes, while the pink production company Million Film also distributed such *yô-pin* during the late '70s and '80s. The perennial favourites during this decade – and which can still be found on video and DVD to this day – aren't so different from what was popular in European or American grindhouses: various titles from the likes of Russ Meyer and Jess Franco; *Emmanuelle* and its numerous sequels and emulators; entries in the long-running 1970s German *Schoolgirl Report* films (released in Japan as *Joshi gakusei maru-hi repôto*);²⁰⁵ Italian films like Joe D'Amato's sleaze-and-splatter melange *Emanuelle and the Last Cannibals* (1977);²⁰⁶ and numerous Swedish and American films, including hardcore titles like *Behind the Green Door* and *Debbie Does Dallas*, adorned with a heavy use of *bokashi* to keep within the boundaries of public decency.²⁰⁷

Foreign porno stars would therefore have been pretty well known in the country, and even though local audiences might well have preferred the local product, it certainly wouldn't have hurt producers to add a smattering of foreign flesh to the bevy of beauties who more frequently appeared in the *pinku eiga* and Roman Porno films.

Western characters pop up in several of the early *eroduction* titles, usually predatory males whose leering presence threatens to disrupt the tranquillity of the leading ladies' existence. Examples include: Jacob-san, the weaselly businessman visiting from abroad in Seiichi Fukuda's *Boneless* (1967), to whom the central character of Yuki is blackmailed into playing submissive hostess; the two servicemen who rough up the innocent young country girl turned glamour model in Osamu Yamashita's *New: Chronicle of an Affair*; and the black GI murdered at the beginning of *Black Snow*. Many nobly opted to play their roles uncredited.

From written descriptions alone we can deduce that most films were more sympathetic than *Black Snow* in their portrayal of black characters, who were often presented not just as sexual powerhouses but as fellow outsiders sharing the same marginal status as the films' heroines. Kan Mukai's *Continuation: Flesh* (1968) portrayed an Afro-American serviceman's affair with a Korean girl,²⁰⁸ while Takae Shindô's *Childbirth: Special Sex Habits Story* (1968) sees Mari Aoki's bar hostess expecting a mixed-race baby after dallying with one of her customers named George.²⁰⁹ In both cases the soldiers are just about to be posted away to serve as cannon fodder in Vietnam, but in the latter George sadly doesn't make it back to Japan. As an aside, a slightly more recent portrayal of another such interracial affair between a bar singer and a US military man, *Bedtime Eyes*, was directed by Tatsumi Kumashiro and released in 1987. The film has been included in a number of foreign overviews of the pink film, no doubt due to Kumashiro's background making Roman Porno, though it is in fact a mainstream production based on the 1985 debut novel of the award-winning writer Eimi (Amy) Yamada.²¹⁰

Several early *eroductions* also capitalised on the novelty value of featuring women who were bigger, bolder and blonder than the national average. Among the photo parade of the genre's most celebrated stunners that takes up several pages at the back of Giichi Nishihara's biography *Yakuza Kantoku* – figures such as Rumi Tama, Miki Hayashi and Naomi Tani – are two white faces, whose names, when transliterated to the Roman alphabet, are Edi Makkunea and Mâurur Uîru. This might perhaps mean their actual names are Edie McNair and Marilyn Weir, but they could just as easily be Eddie MacNair and Marylyn Wheel when converted back from the Japanese syllabary. Neither are listed as being in any other films except together on the one same Aoi Eiga title directed by Nishihara, *Staircase of Sex* (1968), playing opposite Tamaki Katori. Trying the various permutations of characters that could make up their names brings up no suitable matches in the Internet Movie Database either, so we can assume that neither was a regular actress outside of Japan, or if they were, they played under different names. They were most likely cast simply because they were in town, maybe as models, and were available at the time.



above: Poster for Takae Shindô's *Childbirth: Special Sex Habits Story* (1968).



Interracial love: *Childbirth: Special Sex Habits Story* (1968) portrayed the relationship between a prostitute and an Afro-American serviceman.

above: A bedroom scene from the film featuring Yôko Mizusaki.

right: Mari Aoki and 'Paul'.



青木まりと黒人兵のラブシーン

Similarly, one struggles to identify who was the certain Debî Morô (Debby Morrow? Debbie Moreau?) at the heart of three Kinya Ogawa titles from the early '70s: *Blonde Porno Madness* (1972); *Sex Frenzy of a Blonde* (1972); and *Sex Beast King and the Female Hordes* (1975) – especially as she also went under the alternative credit of Debî Monrô (Debbie Monroe?)

While the pink film might have been happy to make do with whatever foreign girls were on hand, major companies like Toei, with its greater capital reserves and more extensive international reach, could afford to be a bit more ambitious when it came to poaching exotic talent from overseas. Take for example the case of Christina Lindberg, "Sweden's most famous centrefold and exploitation film star," according to Wikipedia.²¹¹ Beginning her career as a nude photo model, Lindberg had been *Penthouse* Pet of the Month in June 1970 and had already appeared in several films in her home country before she was accosted by two reps from the Japanese studio. At this point, her best-known role was in the film *Exposed* (1971), which had been heavily promoted at Cannes that year, though at least one of her films, *Maid in Sweden* (1971), had played in Japan (with the alternative title *Jôyoku*, meaning 'sexual desire'). As the actress herself recalls, "I was down in Cannes and they spread pictures of me all over the world, and also Japan I presume. And then some months after I was on my way from Paris, where I had been a fold-out girl in *Lui*, which is a French playmate magazine. And so I was on the plane and I was going back to Stockholm, and when I walked into the cabin two Japanese men came to my place and said, "Are you travelling?" I said yes, and they asked me if I wanted to work in Japan. So yea, "why not" I said, "why not". So I said, here you have my address and telephone number, you can contact me in Sweden in a few days. And they did... It was the Toei company, one of the biggest movie makers in Japan. Those men were probably just some

workers, who were involved in the direction or something. And they asked me if I wanted to go over and so on and then I spoke to a Japanese girl who was living with a Swedish man, and she was going to go with me to translate, you know? Because people in Japan at that time didn't speak English. So she translated all the time. I went over there by myself, as I used to do (laughs), and then I made first of all this movie *Sex and Fury* and then I made another movie also. Then they asked me if I could work for the Toei company when that was over, if I could stay in Japan. It was very easy for me to work with Japanese people."²¹²

In the end, Lindberg decided not to remain in Japan, instead spending only two and a half months at Toei's studios in Kyoto, where she appeared in Norifumi Suzuki's *Sex and Fury* (1973), and then in a more central role in Sadao Nakajima's *Porno Queen: Japan Sex Tour* (1973), a sexy road movie in which she plays a Swedish beauty who arrives in Japan as a drugs mule and winds up fleeing from the police and other more dangerous pursuers with a young bomb-maker played by Ichirô Araki.

One can assume that it must have been a similar process by which French glamour girl Sandra Jullien – who had manifested two opposite yet complementary aspects of her screen persona in Max Pécas's *I Am a Nymphomaniac* (1971)²¹³ and *I Am Frigid... Why?* (1973)

– had wound up in Japan a little over a year previously. She appeared in two films directed by Norifumi Suzuki for Toei: *Modern-Day Porno Legend: Hereditary Harlot* (1971), which paired her with *Sex and Fury* starlet Reiko Ike; and the better-known *The Insatiable*, sometimes referred to by the alternative titles of *The Erotomaniac Daimyo* and *The Shogunate's Harem* (the Japanese title translates as *Tokugawa Sex Prohibition: The Lusty Daimyo*). Both films, incidentally, featured the bosomy former Shinto queen and Ama girl of the late '50s, Yôko Mihara. Set in 1824, the latter was an Edo-period sex comedy in which the reigning shogun Tokugawa XI orders the marriage of his daughter, Kiyohima (Miki Sugimoto), to the ruling Daimyo of Karashima clan in Kyûshû, Tadateru Ogura (Hiroshi Nawa). The only problem is that the lord of the castle has something of a neurosis when it comes to women and sex, which Kiyohima takes as a personal slight when her suitor's first-night nerves get the better of him. The elder councillors search for a remedy in order to stave off the wrath of the shogun, and find one in the doll-like form of a French missionary's daughter named (with a slight air of predictability) Sandra, who is consequently presented to the Daimyo to stimulate his appetite.

The Insatiable played in a number of different countries thanks to this cosmopolitan casting, proving that in both Japan and the West, the exotic was the erotic, and films that bridged the gap between cultures automatically stood out from the crowd and were an easy sell. One of the few Nikkatsu titles circulated widely abroad during this period was *Tokyo Emmanuelle*, directed by Akira Katô. It screened in Germany as *Wilde Emmanuelle im Paradies der Lust* and in the UK was distributed by exploitation specialists Intercontinental under the more prosaic title of *Emmanuelle in Tokyo*. Its odyssey of lesbian encounters, topless workouts at plush fitness centres, nude rugby matches and dreams of riding naked on horseback, as relayed by the movie's heroine Kyôko upon her return to Tokyo on a sojourn away from her husband in France, bore only the scantest connection with Emmanuelle Arsan's famed piece of erotic fiction and the hit French film that it inspired, but it is doubtful anyone anywhere really cared. For Westerners it provided all the local colour of a far-off land, while for the Japanese it had a certain kudos due to its inbuilt associations with the original film. It also had mixed-race actress Kumi Taguchi, whose well-proportioned figure and smouldering dark looks added a mystique in a class of its own, and one that could be readily appreciated by viewers both in and outside Japan.

Tokyo Emmanuelle marked the first starring role for Taguchi, whose striking features also saw her much in demand as a photographic model. The film was made soon after she was scouted from the beauty parlour where she was working, and cast in a small bit part in *Wolf Guy: Burning Wolf Man*, a 1975 Toei film directed by

Kazuhiko Yamaguchi. Taguchi stayed within the world of Roman Porno for most of the relatively small number of films she subsequently appeared in, which included the first film's sequel, *Tokyo Emmanuelle: Private Instruction*, directed the Katsuhiko Fujii the same year. She joined one of the studio's other 'halfies', Runa Takamura (Nikkatsu also had Sally May, the blonde star of the *Foreign Mistress Oman* films), as one of the wicked nuns in Masaru Konuma's *Cloistered Nun: Runa's Confession* (1976), and starred in two further titles that same year: Shôgorô Nishimura's *A Call Girl's Testimony: Exposure*; and Katsuhiko Fujii's *International Flight Stewardess: Sensual Aviation*, which was scripted by Atsushi Yamatoya. She also appeared in other studios' films, like *Edogawa Rampo's Perverted Beast* (1977) for Shochiku.

Outside of *Tokyo Emmanuelle*, Taguchi's best-known appearance was for Toei, and it similarly capitalised on her slightly caucasian features while taking a much-talked about Western title *de jour* as its model. Gerard Damiano's groundbreaking American hardcore film *Deep Throat* (1972) had already played in Japan, albeit with the graphic sexual images masked. Its Japanese re-imagining, *Deep Throat in Tokyo* (1975), provided a rare major studio assignment for Kan Mukai, although judging by the finished film, it doesn't appear that the director was overly influenced by the original, beyond its appropriation of the ultimate wet dream scenario of a woman addicted to giving blow jobs. In a nutshell, the story sees Taguchi playing a character also known as Kumi who, after getting married in the opening scenes, heads off with her new husband Hideo to live with her wealthy industrialist father-in-law Takehiko. The old man immediately develops designs on the sultry new arrival beneath his roof, and is so scheming and corrupt that he not only arranges for his own son and heir to be sent off overseas on a lengthy business trip to get him out of the house, but also arranges for his assassination. Kumi wants none of Hideo's crude advances. However, Hideo has other ways of getting her to comply with his wishes as, in order to stimulate a voracious appetite for fellatio in her, he sends her to his private surgeon to have her clitoris surgically moved to the back of her oesophagus.

Deep Throat in Tokyo is an interesting film in several respects, standing as something of a monument to the peak of the Japanese sex film's international ambitions, yet manifesting all the more regressive elements that marred the country's approach to sexual fantasy. Opening with slow-motion soft focus shots of its star riding on horseback through a long-grassed meadow, and with its drama unfolding in an impossibly glamorous country manor, Mukai's film aspired to the same airbrushed fantasy as Just Jaeckin's softcore blockbuster *Emmanuelle* (and indeed the illegitimate Japanese reworking) – a world apart from the more crude and direct approach taken by its revolutionary American model.

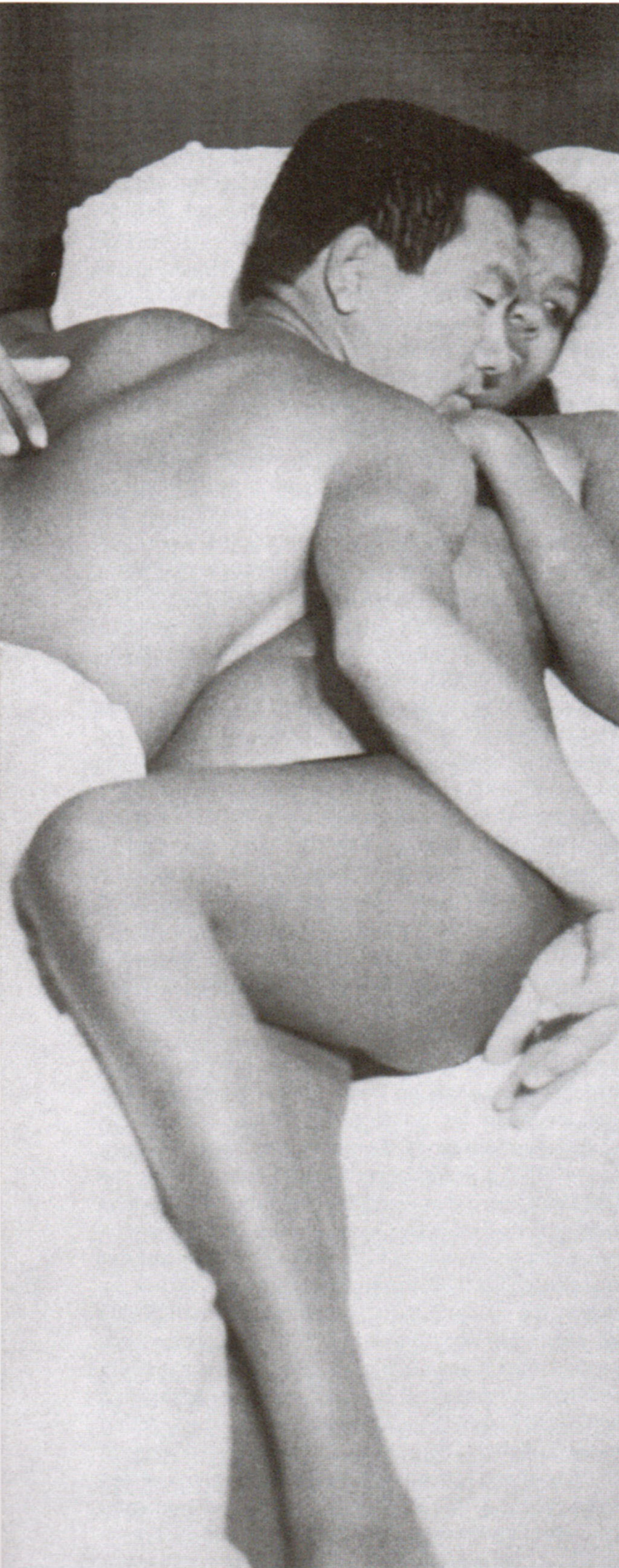
Featuring higher production values and a far better looking actress, *Deep Throat in Tokyo* naturally enough has none of the original's hardcore sequences, but even by Japanese standards it is pretty tame. Despite all that, it is a considerably more offensive work, standing completely at odds with the notion of sex as a liberating force to be enjoyed by both genders that was then gaining currency in the West, and which films like *Deep Throat* at least paid lip service to by acknowledging that sexual satisfaction was just as much a prerogative for a woman as a man. Mukai's is a more aggressive fantasy of female subjugation. Unlike Damiano's film – in which a doctor discovers that Linda Lovelace's clitoris is bizarrely at the back of her throat by a freak natural occurrence, and in order to help her achieve the orgasm that she is unable to attain through conventional sex, he advises her to concentrate on fellatio as her sexual preference – here the placement of her clitoris, and hence the act of fellatio, is forced upon Kumi by her scheming father-in-law in order to facilitate *him*, not her, to achieve orgasm. Eschewing the playful, jokey tone of its US namesake, Mukai ill-advisedly plays the whole thing as a serious drama, although this certainly adds to a certain level of camp enjoyment in such hilarious scenes as Kumi's first post-op orgasm at the dinner table, during which she thrusts a banana down her gullet, red wine spilling over her pristine white skirt to symbolise the hymen's rupture as the orchestral score swells on the soundtrack.

The Japanese had the last laugh however, as Harry Reems, the male lead of the original film, somehow found himself on the other side of the Pacific, where his characteristic comic shtick found itself perfectly served in *Molester Train* director Shinya Yamamoto's incongruously titled *Sacrificial Women* (1978). This juvenile romp boasts a story involving a penis transplant, like the 1971 British sex comedy *Percy*, as an American military researcher named Harry is dragged back to Tokyo by his Japanese wife Ayako in order to receive medical treatment to repair the damage wrought by a traffic accident that left his sexual development stunted and her voracious sexual appetite unassuaged. After a spell under the surgeon's knife, Harry awakens in hospital with his member encased in an obelisk of plaster of Paris, and it is not long before the bewildered *gaijin* has overcome his disorientation and sets out, eyes rolling and arms waving histrionically, to try out his new tool on every woman he clamps his eyes upon. A nurse and a bathhouse geisha are but two of the local lovelies to fall before him, but try as he might, his new weapon refuses to point in the direction of his wife. Meanwhile, Harry finds himself pursued by a gang of mobsters, who believe he has inherited the penis of a dead businessman in which stolen diamonds have been secreted, and the psychotic wife of a post-op transsexual out to reclaim what she believes to be her matrimonial right. At the end, his doctor admits that he

has received the penis of a stallion of the genuine equine variety, and so Harry winds up leaving his wife to run off with a racehorse, a coda which speaks volumes about the anxieties the average Japanese man has in relation to his foreign male rivals.

Sacrificial Women was produced by Toei Central Films, a subsidiary of Toei established in December 1977 with the aim of producing smaller budget films to maintain the supply of Toei's product to the company's contract cinemas that couldn't afford its bigger budget releases. This happened in reaction to the crisis hitting Japanese cinemas during the '60s and '70s, when the major studios began to lose power as distributors over the contract cinemas that exhibited their work, especially those outside urban centres. Toei Central Films didn't only operate using a block-booking system exclusively to serve Toei's contract cinemas; it also used a free booking system: that is, it distributed its films to cinemas not affiliated or tied in to the parent company. Though the new company commissioned two pink films a month, which were produced exclusively by Kan Mukai's Shishi Pro company, it was by no means only involved in the adult film business. Its first released film was Tôru Murakawa's *The Most Dangerous Game* (1978), the first of a number of films for the company to feature one of the era's most iconic action stars, Yûsaku Matsuda, and it also distributed a number of independent productions like Sôgo Ishii's *Crazy Thunder Road* (1980), Kôhei Oguri's *Muddy River* (1981) and Kôji Wakamatsu's *A Pool Without Water* (1982). Toei Central Films was disbanded in October 1988, shortly after Nikkatsu brought an end to its Roman Porno line.²¹⁴

With its sex scenes considerably more restrained than its humour, *Sacrificial Women* is more a smutty comedy than a true pink film. Strangely, an Italian release under the title *Femmine calde per supermaschio bollente* (*Hot Women for a Well-Endowed Superman*) aside, the film managed to slip past viewers outside of Japan pretty much unnoticed. At the time of its making, its leading man was no longer the name star he once had been on his home turf. Charged in 1976 on trumped-up obscenity charges due to his appearance in *Deep Throat*, Reems bears the distinction of being the first (and only) actor ever prosecuted by the US federal government for his film work, and as such received a great degree of support from Hollywood champions of free speech, such as Warren Beatty and Jack Nicholson, during the trial and in its immediate aftermath. While his conviction was quashed in 1977, hardcore pornography never became part of the mainstream film industry, as Reems and his *Deep Throat* associates had anticipated, and the charismatic porno star's acting career in America floundered until the arrival of video in the '80s gave it a second lease of life. By this time he was struggling with alcoholism, and subsequently converted to Christianity, moved to Utah and now makes a living selling real estate. It seems somewhat



odd, given how it occurred during such a blank period of his career, that Reems's Asian escapade is mentioned neither in his filmographies nor in interviews such as the one he gave for the 2005 documentary *Inside Deep Throat*. Aside from representing one of the strangest cases of East-meets-West ever committed to celluloid (as well as one of the most technically well-made films Reems ever appeared in), the circumstances surrounding how he came to be involved in the first place surely must be a pretty fascinating story in its own right, and it is amazing that no one ever seems to have asked him about it.

Inviting foreign porno stars to Japan was one thing, but another possible way of making Japanese sex films more marketable in the international marketplace might be to film them overseas. The first pink film to be shot on foreign soil was made as early as 1965. Kôji Wakamatsu's *The Sun's Navel* was filmed in Hawaii on a slightly higher budget than the norm of 8.8 million yen. The film no longer seems to exist in any viewable form, but a look at the credits reveals a primarily non-Japanese cast, with names such as Tiara Wood, Helen Kennedy and Ralph Spencer²¹⁵ supporting the top-billed Japanese star Gorô Mutsumi. Mutsumi's first break came in Wakamatsu's 1963 debut *Sweet Trap*, and over the next few decades he moved on to appearances in more mainstream productions, mainly for Toei and Toho, including a job as the narrator for Ishirô Honda's *The War of the Gargantuas* the following year. Interestingly, there is only one female cast member listed for Wakamatsu's film who has any other association with the *eroduction* sector, and that is Kazuko Maki.

Nikkatsu too dispatched some of its in-house directors overseas to shoot a number of films whose Japanese origins are almost imperceptible. Tucked away uncelebrated in the company's back catalogue are several titles with casts exclusively made up of fair-skinned performers and filmed in one of the countries most strongly linked with liberal attitudes to screen sex in the global imagination. The company's so-called Sweden Porno (*Suêden Poruno*) range appears to have begun with two separate double bills released in the very early days of Roman Porno. The first, premiered on 11 December, 1971, was made up of *Sweden Porno: Desire First Sex Experience*²¹⁶ (credited to a director with a Scandinavian-sounding name that might be written in the roman alphabet as Crystal Holgren)²¹⁷ and *Sweden Porno: Forest of Beastly Desire*, directed by Sakô Sakawa, while the second pairing, released on 11 March, 1972, consisted of *Sweden Porno: Blonde Animal* (another Sakawa title) and *Sweden Porno: Sex Beast's Agony*,²¹⁸ attributed to a certain 'Bento Ransuten'. The JMDB doesn't list anything beyond the scantest of details for these first four films, so it is not clear whether they were shot overseas or with foreign performers. One can only conjecture who the foreign-sounding directors listed are. It is highly possible that the names

above: Gorô Mutsumi and the exotic Tiara Wood in *The Sun's Navel* (1965). Set in Hawaii, it was the first pink film shot overseas. ©Wakamatsu Pro

are pseudonyms, as there aren't any entries in English-language sources that correspond convincingly. But Sakawa had a history in the *eroduction* industry, which stretched back at least as far as a 1965 feature called *Night Mischief*. The two Swedish films represent his only for work a major studio, and are also the last titles listed in his filmography.

The *Sweden Porno* range continued in 1973 with two more easily identifiable titles, made with European casts and all-Japanese crews, and helmed by directors more central to Nikkatsu's Roman Porno operation. Akira Katô made *Droppar Av Honung*, or *Drops of Honey*, featuring Solveig Andersson, the star of such early gems of European erotica as *Eva: Swedish and Underage* (1969), *The Lustful Vicar* (1970), *Dagmar's Hot Pants* (1971) and *Swedish Wildcats* (1972), while Shôgorô Nishimura contributed *Bockens Hus*, or *Inn of Perverted Beasts*, starring Inger Sundh of, among other things, *The Seduction of Inga* (1969). Both actresses were contemporaries of Christina Lindberg, the Swedish sex kitten



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top: On location in Hawaii with Kôji Wakamatsu: *The Sun's Navel*. ©Wakamatsu Pro

above: *Droppar Av Honung*, or *Drops of Honey* (1973): An exploration of Swedish sexual habits by Nikkatsu director Akira Katô. ©Nikkatsu Corporation



above: *Desire First Sex Experience*, released three weeks after the first Roman Porno film, *Apartment Wife: Afternoon Affair*, marked the beginning of Nikkatsu's short-lived Sweden Porno line, although who actually directed it remains a mystery. ©Nikkatsu Corporation

shipped over by Toei for *The Insatiable*, and Andersson appeared alongside her in several local productions. There don't appear to be any more of these Swedish titles made by Nikkatsu, but it seems strange that the films, which to all intents and purposes must look like European ones, never appear to have been issued for the home viewing market in Japan, and the latter two are only mentioned in passing in Sadao Yamane's otherwise comprehensive reference book on Roman Porno, *Kannô no puroguramu pikuchaa – Roman Poruno 1971-1982 zen eiga*.²¹⁹ It is as if they are not truly considered to be Japanese films, and yet they don't appear to have left any traces overseas either.

As the decade wore on, Europe began to offer something more than just a pool of different coloured casts to draw upon. As the Nikkatsu 'obscenity' trial, prompted by the police seizure of *Love Hunter* and the films that had played alongside it, continued throughout much of the '70s, countries like France, Italy and Sweden appeared to offer considerably more liberal production environments for filmmakers for whom anything more sexually frank than images of bums and boobs ran the distinct risk of a spell in jail. Ultimately, no Japanese director was ever convicted for violating Article 175 of the penal code, but in 1976,

another prominent figure from the film world found himself in court answering the same charges as Tetsuji Takechi had done in the '60s.

There are several interesting aspects to the particular case we are about to look at. The first is that the man in question, Nagisa Ôshima, had publicly lent his support to Takechi during this earlier obscenity trial and was a highly articulate critic of any form of state control, not just film censorship. Secondly, Ôshima was not being prosecuted for an actual film, but a book containing its script, several essays and 23 glossy full-colour stills from it. And finally, though the director was Japanese, the film in question was, strictly speaking, not. *L'empire des sens*, hereafter referred to by its more commonly known English-language title, *In the Realm of the Senses*²²⁰ (its Japanese release title was *Ai no korîda*, meaning 'The Bullfight of Love'), might well be the one title in this book that those with neither any particular interest in sex films, Japanese cinema, nor world cinema in general have heard about or seen. Though shot at Daiei Studios in Kyoto²²¹ with an all-Japanese cast, the film was a French-funded production. Additionally, the film stock was imported from France, with the unexposed 'obscene' footage filmed by Ôshima shipped back to Europe for processing.

In the Realm of the Senses had its genesis due to a friendship forged through Ôshima's various excursions to Cannes. The producer Anatole Dauman (1925-98) was a Polish émigré born into a family he himself described as "a vast Russian-Polish drift that came to a halt in Bălty in Romania, then in Warsaw, Nice and Paris according to the fluctuations of the bourgeoisie's fortunes in the jazz ages".²²² He had formed his own company, Argos Films, in 1949 along with his partner Philippe Lifchitz, initially for "the production, rental and world distribution of short films",²²³ but which later moved into the production of what he later described as, "literary cinema: a cinema not of literary adaptations but of cineastes who invent an exceptional relation between the text and the images." In short, Dauman specialised in producing the works of auteurs, and by the time he met Ôshima, the titles linked with his name included: *Night and Fog* (1955) and *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959) by Alain Resnais (the latter representing Dauman's first encounter with the East); a number of films by Chris Marker, including his best-known work *La jetée* (1962); and Jean-Luc Godard's *Masculin-féminin* (1966) and *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (1967).

Dauman's initial association with the Japanese director came through his role as distributor for *Death By Hanging* and *The Ceremony* in the West.²²⁴ According to Ôshima, the provocative opening gambit that ultimately led to *In the Realm of the Senses* occurred thus: "It was the end of the summer of 1972. I stopped over in Paris on the way home from the Venice Film Festival, where I had taken *Dear Summer Sister*. Dauman suddenly came out with it in the anteroom of a small

private showing room called Club 70. 'Let's collaborate on a film, a co-production. A porno. I'll leave the content and the actual production all to you. I'll pay for it, that's all.'"²²⁵ Dauman later contested Ôshima's recollection of the discussion, claiming the word 'pornographic' never so much as crossed his lips,²²⁶ although his mind was probably working along these lines, because he also produced Walerian Borowczyk's envelope-pushing portmanteau *Immoral Tales* in 1974, with its intended fifth section, *The Beast*, released in expanded form the following year. Nevertheless, from this mis-imagined exchange (mediated by Tôwa's Kazuko Kawakita and Shun Shibata, the president of a French film company, acting as interpreters), the germs of an idea began to emerge. Dauman was to look after the financial side of things, while Ôshima was given almost complete creative freedom to do what he wanted.

It has to be remembered that in the early '70s, Ôshima was experiencing some difficulty finding funding in Japan for his intellectually-ambitious strain of art cinema, especially after *Dear Summer Sister* had bombed at the box office. The offer to work on a foreign production with no strings attached must have been irresistible. Ôshima initially wrote two treatments. The one Dauman opted for was based on a notorious real-life scandal in which, on 21 May, 1936, a lowly geisha named Sada Abe was found wandering around the streets of Tokyo with a strangely serene expression on her face, and holding a knife, a rope and a severed penis. It immediately transpired that the latter object, kept secreted in her handbag, belonged to her lover Kichizô Ishida, referred to by her more familiarly as Kichi, who had been the owner of the inn where she was working. The two had just spent a month together, locked in a passionate *amour fou*, barely emerging from the bedroom to engage with the real world. As Sada's love became more obsessive, she took to throttling him to maintain his ardour, eventually seeking to possess him entirely. It was during one such moment of heightened passion that she (accidentally?) asphyxiated him, and then removed his penis. The incident and resulting court case caused a national scandal that kept newspapers busy long after Sada found herself convicted of manslaughter and was sentenced to six years in prison. She was released in 1940.

Though the incident was shocking, even at the time Sada was not without public sympathy for her plight. Born into a poor family in 1905, after years of plying her trade as a low-ranking geisha (in reality little more than a prostitute), she had begun working in various menial jobs in order to pay off the significant debts she'd accumulated, which had kept her tied to the geisha house where she'd trained. It was in this way that she came to be working at Kichi's restaurant. Their intense but short-lived affair, conducted quite openly and initially right under the nose of Kichi's wife, might therefore be seen as an equal union between man and woman, a moment of

liberation played out in a realm wholly indifferently to the chauvinistic apparatus of a society in which many women are essentially little more than chattel.

And so Sada Abe came to be mythologised as a source of fascination and danger to men, while simultaneously becoming something of a feminist icon. She was a woman who took control of her destiny and emerged victorious from the power play inherent in the sexual act, the selfish pursuit of individual pleasure that unfolds ritually behind closed doors ('the bullring of love' referred to by the Japanese title, apparently suggested by Dauman).²²⁷ As the newspapers at the time gleefully reported, before abandoning his emasculated corpse and wandering out into the streets, Sada had scrawled the words "Sada Kichi futari kiri" ("Sada Kichi together alone") in his blood on his body and the sheets. Ôshima once said "Sada's name is so popular in Japan that it suffices to pronounce it to touch on the most serious sexual taboos. It is quite natural that a Japanese artist should want to dedicate his work to that marvellous woman."²²⁸

Ôshima was not the only person to draw upon this figure for artistic inspiration. In his book *Public People, Private People*, Donald Richie paints a poignant and



above: Publicity material for the Korean release of Nagisa Ôshima's notorious *In the Realm of the Senses* (1976).



poetic portrait of the woman during the years after her release, when she was working at The Star-Chrysanthemum-Water Bar (Hoshi-kiku-sui) in downtown Tokyo,²²⁹ while prior to Ôshima's film, her story was first told in one of the instalments of Teruo Ishii's *Meiji Era, Taisho Era, Showa Era: Bizarre Woman Crime History* (1969), with Sada played by Yukie Kagawa and the true-life woman actually turning up in a cameo. More importantly, just prior to *In the Realm of the Senses*, Nikkatsu director Noboru Tanaka presented his take on events with *A Woman Called Abe Sada* (1975), which featured Junko Miyashita in the title role and Hideaki Esumi as Kichi. The third and most recent version – and the first time Sada's story has been told in a format that can aptly be described as mainstream – came with Nobuhiko Ôbayashi's *Sada* (1998).

Ôshima's film is one of those masterworks that inspire different, often contradictory thoughts and feelings in all those who behold it. It does what most *pinku eiga* and Roman Porno rarely even dream of doing. It engages the intellect while simultaneously indulging, indeed over-indulging, the senses, to such an extent as might be considered confrontational. The question as to whether it is 'art' or 'pornography' is something of a moot one, although one around which much discussion of the film apparently revolves.²³⁰ Ôshima himself stated during his trial that, "I

completely oppose the viewpoint so often evident at past trials involving Article 175 of the Criminal Code and the question, 'Is it art or is it obscenity?' I have absolutely no intention of asserting, 'Because this is art, it is not obscene.'"²³¹ It is certain that a large proportion of its viewers, both Japanese and foreign, were, and continue to be, drawn to watching it out of prurient curiosity about its levels of explicitness rather than any real interest in or understanding of Ôshima's artistic vision of the insanity that he saw symptomatic of pre-war Japan. If the erotic is what resides in the imagination, while the pornographic is what is presented explicitly, then the film can no doubt be described as pornographic. "I want the gestures and words to come from one single discourse: the sexual discourse," Ôshima said of the film in response to the observation by a French interviewer that, "The action of the film is presented as an uninterrupted act of love; only the places where it happens change according to an itinerary which allows the lovers no respite whatever. We come across twenty different decors in this way, twenty love-rooms, places enclosed like an arena consecrated to a deadly ritual."²³² The relationship between Kichi and Sada is never portrayed as anything other than a sensual one, with no dimension to their dialogue that can be described as intellectual.

However, if pornography is defined as appealing directly and exclusively to the senses, giving little for the viewer's mind to work with, then such a dismissive charge seems misplaced here. There is certainly considerably more than meets the eye behind the explicit parade of genital depictions, fellatio, penetration shots and the legendary castration at the end of the film. But context plays a significant role here, and it takes a degree of familiarity with Japanese history, film culture and censorship perhaps to appreciate more fully just what this might be.

Many have taken on trust the idea that Ôshima's film emerged as something of a kickback against Japanese screen pornography as it existed at the time, without exploring more fully the conventions and restrictions of the pink film and Roman Porno genres – namely those imposed by budget, censorship, audience expectations and the talents and aspirations of the individual directors working within the field. In this respect, a comparison with Noboru Tanaka's *A Woman Called Abe Sada* is highly fruitful in shedding further light on what exactly Ôshima was trying to achieve, because in many respects we might describe *In the Realm of the Senses* as something of an anti-Roman Porno film.²³³ (Ironically Nikkatsu immediately cashed in on the notoriety of Ôshima's film a year after its Japanese release, with a film directed by Masaru Konuma whose title translates as *Corrida of Sex and Love*).

Ôshima's rendition of the tale arrived soon enough after Tanaka's to raise interesting speculation as to what extent one influenced the other. We should take into account that *In the Realm of the Senses* took over three years to reach the screen – a relatively lengthy period of pre-production planning and rigorous rewrites – while the average Roman Porno film would have been scripted, shot and in cinemas within a matter of weeks. Tanaka might have gotten wind of Ôshima's planned international debut and attempted to pre-empt it. Just as likely, is that the arrival of Tanaka's film prompted certain artistic decisions in Ôshima's film that influenced its final form. We should nevertheless probably attribute their close arrival to coincidence, and that many of the more memorable scenes must have been reconstructed from documented facts from the case and knowledge about the era in which it occurred, for example: the erotic food-play between the couple; the scene in which Sada snips off a tuft of Kichi's pubic hair; and the images of soldiers marching through the streets outside, whose significance we'll come to shortly. Nevertheless, as very little of Nikkatsu's output travelled overseas during the Roman Porno years, Tanaka's version was completely overlooked outside of Japan until the late '90s, when it was aired as part of several retrospectives of Nikkatsu's Roman Porno films around the world, such as the one held at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts in 1997. Tanaka remained more than slightly disappointed that



above: Junko Miyashita and Hideaki Esumi in the deadly love match that will leave one of them dead in *A Woman Called Abe Sada* (1975). ©Nikkatsu Corporation
opposite top: Written in blood, "Sada Kichi futari kiri" ("Sada Kichi together alone"). Junko Miyashita in a scene from Noboru Tanaka's *A Woman Called Abe Sada* (1975). ©Nikkatsu Corporation



above: Original poster art for Noboru Tanaka's more refined *A Woman Called Abe Sada* (1975). ©Nikkatsu Corporation

few in the wider world were even aware of his film, and that, even after its belated discovery, his should be considered the lesser version of the tale.²³⁴

As noted, the taboo-breaking nature of Sada's story made it particularly fitting for treatment by a company as focused on adult-themed material as Nikkatsu, and Tanaka himself was known for his more artistically ambitious projects at the studio. We also know that Ôshima's attitude to erotic cinema and its practitioners was not one of condescension, nor moral or intellectual superiority as such, as his association with Kôji Wakamatsu and Masao Adachi amply demonstrates. But he was also keenly aware of the limitations of the genre, writing in 1973 for example that, "the majority of Nikkatsu's so-called *roman porno* films take sex as their subject matter and not as their theme. The themes of their most highly regarded films tend to be something like adolescent rebellion; sex is merely the seasoning. This old method has been used for a long time; it is precisely why these films are attractive to superficial critics and young film buffs."²³⁵

The film that inspired Ôshima's essay, incidentally, was Tatsumi Kumashiro's *World of Geisha*, which as previously noted had tackled the issue of state suppression by looking at the infamous literary work

Under the Four-and-a-Half Tatami Sliding Door, banned in the Taishô period. In the essay, Ôshima criticises Kumashiro's film for being "a little too refined. It fails to realise the effect of pornography. Since the authorities would presumably be in a bind were people to lose the desire to do 'it' and stop having children, they probably did not mean to ban pornography; rather they were concerned about its becoming too refined."²³⁶

Unsurprisingly, *A Woman Called Abe Sada* comes across as the more "refined" and conventional piece of erotic cinema in comparison to Ôshima's more oppressive and claustrophobic rendition. It was realised within a studio system to fit an established product line that was marketed on sex. Within this context, the performances are strong and the film is solidly crafted, inventively staged and elegantly presented in tune with the aesthetics of the era. Stylistically speaking, it is the more sophisticated work, but in this it is helpful to take into account the dictionary definition of the word, as "altered from or deprived of natural simplicity or innocence; falsified to a greater or lesser extent; not plain, honest or straightforward."²³⁷ For Tanaka's approach is also highly artificial and more than a little self-conscious, with the narrative beginning with Sada's voiceover being set against a plain blank screen and told in flashbacks. Authentic newspaper clippings of the notorious case also appear onscreen, initially providing a backdrop to the film's title. Though not 'pornographic' by the consensual understanding of the word nowadays, like all pornography it is disingenuous in as much as it is less concerned with authenticity than with presenting the sexual act packaged for audiences. Lighting, shot composition and performance are prioritised to give optimum vantage of Miyashita's naked breasts and thighs during the love scenes, and it goes without saying that the viewer is targeted as being male.

It is significant in this respect that many viewers claim that they don't find Ôshima's film erotic or arousing, even though it is considerably more graphic in its depictions of the sexual act. Aside from this sheer explicitness, one remarkable aspect of *In the Realm of the Senses* is that it rejects the standard voyeuristic *nozoki* position, or rather it subverts it so that most of the scenes are witnessed by women, as opposed to men, and often involuntarily. This is apparent as early as the significant first encounter, when Sada catches Kichi's eye as she and a fellow waitress stumble upon him being luxuriated upon by his wife one morning. Sada later not only asserts dominance in the bedroom; she more or less 'performs' with Kichi for the benefit of the various female third parties of Kichi's employees, and the geishas, chambermaids, and other assorted hotel staff who find themselves in the same orbit as the couple, providing obvious stand-ins for the off-screen viewer. Throughout their flight from civilised society, Sada essentially forces these otherwise passive witnesses to acknowledge their affair directly. Ôshima arguably rather over-emphasises

this particular editorial detail, but the point he is making is that the sex acts occurring within the film are not being staged for the benefit of the male gaze, and it is Sada who exerts the sexual dominance. Aside from Kichi, men are rather excluded from this world: An early scene shows a group of local women gathering curiously around a recumbent aged drunkard, one of Sada's former patrons. As one playfully parts his kimono to reveal his privates to the tittering ensemble behind her, a young boy throws a snowball at his withered manhood. One in the eye for the assumed Roman Porno viewer, and this is way before the gruesome climax, which in a pornographic context might be seen as a direct reference to the eyeball-slicing image of Buñuel's *Un chien Andalou*.

Ôshima not only addresses the visual component of the sexual act, which along with sound is the only one that can be conveyed directly in cinema; his film also evokes the other three senses of touch, taste and smell, as exemplified in the near-legendary scenes such as the one in which Sada dips a mushroom between her legs with chopsticks, coating it with her vaginal juices, before feeding it to Kichi.²³⁸

The film's original French title, *L'empire des sens*, is a direct reference to the philosopher and semiologist Roland Barthes's book, *L'empire des signes* (known in its English translation as the *Empire of Signs*), which had just been published in 1970. Barthes's book was the author's attempt at delivering an epistolary account (i.e. one conveyed purely in written language) of a visit to the country, in which his status as a foreigner, and thus unanchored within the culture, restricted any interpretation or attempts at conveying the truth or essence of his subject to just its observable phenomena. By depicting this alien world of shifting signs and symbols, and within the purely symbolic form of words, Barthes's book deliberately foregrounded the alienness of what it attempted to describe, thus drawing attention to both the author and the reader's role in reconstructing this world within their imagination. He especially emphasised that it was impossible to access the 'reality' of Japan with all the preconceptions and the structure of thinking of the West, which could only Westernize it by subjecting it to Western theory. By staying entirely within the realm of signs and fantasy, one could thereby come closer to the real 'truth' of Japan.

Just as Barthes attempts to describe the reality of his world through his written *signes*, so does Ôshima through the sensual language of cinema, a language which is *experienced* by the viewer before it is *interpreted*. In this, he also emphasises how Sada and Kichi's withdrawal from the purely rational world into their own private and unmediated realm of the senses ultimately results in destruction for them both. The word 'Empire' (translated from the French to 'Realm' for the English title) also has its own connotations pertinent to what Ôshima is trying to convey.

Within the context of the world around them, Sada and Kichi's irrationalism might also be their salvation. Like many others, Ôshima saw the Sada Abe incident as symptomatic of the madness of the era. It occurred only a few months after the thwarted military coup known as the *ni-ni-roku* (two-two-six) incident, named after the date it took place: 26 February, 1936. On this day, 1400 soldiers occupied a number of key buildings in the centre of Tokyo, and several prominent politicians were killed (the event is referenced in the coda of Seijun Suzuki's 1966 film *Fighting Elegy*). Japan was also just about to begin its war of aggression on the Asian mainland, triggered by the so-called Marco Polo Bridge Incident of 7 July, 1937 – a war that would spell ruin for the country.

As mentioned, images of imperial soldiers marching in the streets occur on several occasions in Tanaka's film, viewed with curiosity but without any further comment from the hotel room window by the protagonists. Ôshima evokes this motif only once, in perhaps the film's crucial scene, as Kichi walks down the street, lost in his own private (and probably sexual) thoughts, a smile playing upon his lips, and seemingly oblivious to the parade of soldiers marching in the opposite direction being cheered on by the rest of the public. If Kichi is mad with love, then the scene reminds us of Friedrich Nietzsche's observation that "Madness is rare in individuals – but in groups, parties, nations, and ages it is the rule."²³⁹

These are but a few of the ways in which the two films differ. Another lies within the casting. In stark contrast with Junko Miyashita's more forceful interpretation, Eiko Matsuda's haunted look strikes a perfect note as a woman driven to insanity by her obsession, sexually potent yet destructively so: a point stressed in one pivotal scene that has proven the most problematic of all in some countries in recent years, in which she tugs rather forcefully on the penis of a young boy she is playing with, making him cry. The scene is included to indicate the point at which she first transgresses the realms of all reasonable behaviour, as well as portending Kichi's later demise.²⁴⁰ Kichi is also pitch-perfectly played, by Tatsuya Fuji, a former star of Nikkatsu Action films during the '60s and still acting to this day, with one memorable recent appearance in Kiyoshi Kurosawa's *Bright Future* (2003). Suave, laconic and completely given over to the pursuit of sensual pleasure, he passively allows himself to be relieved by Sada of his social status, his masculinity and ultimately his life, carrying across one of the key points contained within the film; the sublation of rational common sense by overwhelming, irrational passion.

Somewhat ironically, neither of the two leads ever appeared in any Roman Porno or pink movies. Fuji's last credit at Nikkatsu occurred literally months before the company committed itself along this line in 1971. On the evidence here, we can safely assume that modesty

was not the reason for his departure, and that like many actors employed by the studio during the '60s, his contract was cut, forcing him onto pastures new. Eiko Matsuda's case is a little sadder, in that after a sparse handful of films immediately following her debut in this film, including *Shogun's Floating World Bathhouse* (1977), directed by Ikuo Sekimoto at Toei's Kyoto studios, and Kôji Wakamatsu's *Eros Eterna* (1977), released by ATG, she quickly faded from Japanese screens, although she is credited as appearing in a French film from 1982 entitled *Five and the Skin*, about which few further details appear to be available. Maybe her performance was that little bit too convincing.

A good proportion of the rest of the cast is comprised of familiar names more known for their roles in adult films, suggesting Ôshima's familiarity with this world: actresses such as Aoi Nakajima, Meika Seri, Hiroko Fuji and Yasuko Matsui, as well as the veteran actor Kôji Kokonoe, who started his career in the mid-'50s at the original Shintohe run by Mitsugu Ôkura. *In the Realm of the Senses* marks his final screen appearance, as Sada's elderly patron Ômiya, although most of his roles were in pink films. As well as these performers, Katsue Tomiyama, founding member of Image Forum, the country's leading institution dedicated to experimental film and video, infamously played a young geisha in one of the scenes.

The film does have one other significant link with the pink genre. On the Japanese side, Kôji Wakamatsu took the reins as producer, bringing with him his regular cinematographer Hideo Itô. Most foreign language writing on this film neglects to mention Wakamatsu's role in the production, but we have already noted the relationship between this pioneering figure, who had emerged from the *eroduction* world, and Japan's most-internationally prominent director of left-of-centre arthouse films in the '60s. It is also worth emphasising how, even as early as 1965, Wakamatsu's overseas production of *The Sun's Navel* and his arrival in Berlin with *Secret Acts Behind Walls* – not to mention his later exploits in the Golan Heights in the early '70s – had indicated a far more internationally-minded outlook than other Japanese filmmakers of the era, and certainly more than his peers in *pinku eiga*. He was also a man who got things done, and was certainly not averse to taking risks or courting controversy.

One of Wakamatsu's most interesting decisions for *In the Realm of the Senses* was employing a young filmmaker named Yôichi Sai as assistant director. Sai's previous experience had been working as an assistant director on a politically-charged short 16mm documentary whose title, *Indictment: Report of Government Crimes Against Korean Residents in Japan* (1974), reflected his own background as a *zainichi* (Korean resident in Japan), and consequent outsider status. The *zainichi* issue in Japan is a complex one, as few people are able to physically distinguish between Koreans and 'pure-blood' ethnic Japanese, and Korean

residents in Japan have been historically forced to adopt Japanese names. But even if a third- or fourth-generation Korean is born on Japanese soil, speaks only Japanese and has no connection to Korea, they are still unable to carry a Japanese passport. Discrimination against *zainichi* was tackled in the '80s in the independent films of Yoshihiko Matsui, and later in the pink films of Matsui's associate Kazuhiro Sano, as we shall see in a later chapter. It later became a hot topic in commercial cinema, with films like Isao Yukisada's *Go* (2001) and Kazuyuki Izutsu's *Pacchigi! (We Shall Overcome Someday)* (2004) all owing their existence to one of the key titles that drew attention to the plight of such 'foreigners' in Japan, *All Under the Moon* (1993), which is about a *zainichi* cab driver and his girlfriend, a Filipino barmaid. It was Yôichi Sai who was the director behind this highly influential popular title, voted best film of the year by the Kinema Junpô critics. Incidentally, alongside a number of mainstream titles for the Kadokawa company in the '80s, Sai had directed one Roman Porno film, *Sexual Crime* (1983), a gritty erotic thriller that highlights both the versatility of Nikkatsu's format in the right hands and also the studio's part in the early careers of directors who would later become key players in the industry. Yôichi Sai's appointment on *In the Realm of the Senses* is a significant one in that, in his 1994 television documentary *100 Years of Japanese Cinema*, Ôshima pinpointed the emergence of hitherto suppressed voices such as *zainichi* into the mainstream as one of the more significant trends in Japanese cinema, and explicitly cites Sai as an example. Films like *All Under the Moon* were important in disrupting established notions about Japanese homogeneity, and presented a more complex picture of the individual and their relationship to the state (either 'state' as a fictional construct or as a tangible authority), which was one of the recurrent motifs in Ôshima's cinema, most evident in films like *Death By Hanging* (1968) and certainly pertinent to any discussion of *In the Realm of the Senses*.

"Isn't this the first time people have wanted to see one of your films so badly?" Ôshima quotes his wife as saying in an essay contained within the book containing the script and images from the film published in 15 June, 1976, with her comments following the hype built up by its premiere at Cannes in May that year.²⁴¹ Even though it only played in a heavily-censored version upon its theatrical release in Japan on 16 October, 1976, *In the Realm of the Senses* caused an immediate scandal. Like the flagrant behaviour of its central couple, its very existence was a complete affront to the assumed mores and social codes of the Japanese that the censors and customs officials were trying to protect. It had been released in Paris a month before, on 15 September, where it played unedited. Hardcore pornography had been legalised in France on 26 April, 1975, and soon stories became rife of Japanese tourists travelling all the way to Paris to watch the film uncut. Ôshima claimed

that Dauman had estimated that within 17 months of its release, between 70-80,000 of the 350,000 people who saw it were Japanese. The film fared less well in other countries: the print was confiscated from the projection room by the Criminal Investigation Police Department during the 1976 Berlin Film Festival, and similarly banned before its scheduled US premiere at the New York Film Festival the same year (though it was later released uncut, and proved especially popular in the various cities that were part of the Japanese tourist itinerary, both on the American mainland and in Hawaii). In the UK, it was refused an 'X' certificate, and though it could be seen at various repertory cinemas in London during the following 15 years, it was not awarded a formal BBFC release certificate until 1991. In many countries it remained unreleased altogether until even later.

Ironically, it was the book of the film that led to Ôshima being tried for obscenity, and as such he was accompanied in the dock by its editor, Hajime Takemura. Ôshima based his defence around the legal definition of obscenity and the vague wording of his charge, and whether he could even really be held responsible. After all, shouldn't the photographer rather than the film director be accountable for the production stills that were taken on the set?²⁴² Meanwhile, because the wheels of justice move so slowly in Japan, and as it was not actually the film that Ôshima was being prosecuted for, it was issued on VHS by Toho Video in 1977. This version has a stated length of 106 minutes, suggesting that very little, if anything, has been cut, although according to the scholar Paul Berry, there are at least 45 instances of *bokashi* or other means of masking. Ever the provocateur (and even more the opportunist), Wakamatsu issued a 'special' edit, also through Toho Video, with a stated running time of a meagre 30 minutes, to take advantage of all the publicity while making a blunt point about the arbitrary nature of Japanese censorship – although two thirds of the film had been cut, including those containing crucial exposition, five instances of *bokashi* remained.²⁴³

The trial was customarily drawn out, but in 1982 Ôshima and Takemura were finally acquitted. It was the last incident of its kind. While the trial was still running, Ôshima made one more film for Dauman, which despite the claims made in his book that, "I do want to make one more pornographic film, completely different in format from *In the Realm of the Senses*,"²⁴⁴ failed to create much of a stir (although it did win Ôshima the Best Director Award at the 1978 Cannes Film Festival). Very little has been written about *Empire of Passion* (1978) in comparison with its predecessor, and it is not so difficult to work out why. It is simply not a particularly interesting film, and any similarities with the previous film are limited to the title and the casting of Tatsuya Fuji as the male lead. Set in a small rural village during the Edo period, the story plays something like a *kaidan* version of *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, with a pair of adulterous



above: Scenes from Nagisa Ôshima's *In the Realm of the Senses* (1976).
© 1976, Argos Films - Oshima Productions



lovers bumping off an inconvenient husband only for him to return from beyond the grave. Despite some passionate love scenes, which certainly never reach the same censor-baiting intensity as the earlier work, it is not particularly relevant to any discussion of pink cinema.

Ôshima's part in this history of eroticism in Japanese film effectively comes to an end here. For the next decade, he continued to work overseas, hooking up with another prestigious producer, Jeremy Thomas, to make perhaps his best-known work, the wartime POW drama *Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence* (1983) with Tom Conti, David Bowie and a very early role for Takeshi Kitano. He later ditched all Japanese elements in *Max, mon amour* (1989), a bizarre comedy of manners with a script by *Belle de jour* screenwriter Jean-Claude Carrière, that sees Charlotte Rampling playing a British diplomat's wife who conducts an affair with a chimpanzee. After a lengthy hiatus he made his long-awaited return to Japanese cinema with *Gohatto* (1999), the tale of homosexuality and infighting within the ranks of the law-enforcing squad known as the *shinsengumi*, which was formed to protect the Shogun from the rabble just prior to the dawn of the Meiji Period. Ironically, the film was produced by Shochiku, the very studio Ôshima had stormed out of almost three decades before to embark on one of Japanese cinema's most fascinating cinema solo careers. Sadly, a stroke saw Ôshima directing this last film from a wheelchair, and it looks certain to be his last.

Though relevant to the subject, few of the titles mentioned in this chapter can be accurately described as pink films, produced as they were by major studios, and as we've seen, even labelling *In the Realm of the Senses* as a Japanese film is not strictly accurate. There were other directors who also headed to Europe in the mid-'70s and went the whole hog, working purely with European casts, crews and locations, as well as European money. Since many of these stretch the definition of the pink film well past its remit, I'll mention them only in passing. Firstly there was Masuo Ikeda (1934-97), an artist, painter, engraver, potter and novelist – in fact generally a creative Jack of all trades, and while it might be a little harsh to quip “and master of none,” on the evidence provided by his two Italian feature

productions, clearly film was not among his more successful endeavours. Ikeda's original novel, *Dedicated to the Aegean Sea*,²⁴⁵ had earned him the prestigious Akutagawa Prize for literature in 1977. Following Ôshima's lead, he headed to Europe to film his tale of a young Greek art student called Nikos, whose innocence is corrupted by his predatory landlady and her retarded daughter. Shot on location in Rome and Greece, the film's most interesting aspect is its cast, which consists of some of the biggest names from the world of Italian exploitation cinema at the time: those familiar with the country's *giallo* thrillers, horror and softcore sex films from this period will keenly note the presence of: Olga Karlatos, the victim of the infamous eyeball-skewering scene in Lucio Fulci's *Zombie Flesh-Eaters* (1979); Stefania Casini, who played Jessica Harper's confidante in Dario Argento's *Suspiria* (1977); and Hungarian-born Ilona Staller, a colourful character who later achieved a certain infamy under the name of Cicciolina as a hardcore performer and nude model as well as the one-time wife of the American artist Jeff Koons (Cicciolina was also a politician, democratically elected to Italian parliament for her stance on environmental issues and nuclear disarmament). Ikeda's film featured scenes of a sexual nature that were considerably stronger than were considered acceptable back in Japan at the time, and the customs authorities were ready and waiting to intercept the imported print. The film went out on release in his home country in a considerably censored version. Ikeda later returned to Italy to make *Rome from the Window* (1982), a thriller co-produced with Shochiku starring Claudio Cassinelli and the Japanese idol of the moment, Kimiko Nakayama, whose full frontal nude scenes also ended up shaded in all Japanese release versions. Though unknown overseas, the two films have been issued on video and DVD on a fairly regular basis in Japan. But still, Ikeda's name seldom crops up in a film-related context nowadays, and he never made anything else, so one can discount him from exerting much influence on the course of the nation's film history.

Rome seemed to have been the favoured hotspot for Japanese directors aiming to add a bit of European pizzazz to otherwise uninteresting films. Yasuzô Masumura's penultimate feature saw him returning to the Italian capital, where his film career had begun some thirty years earlier, studying at the Centro Sperimentale della Cinematografia. Despite its entry in Thomas Weisser's *Japanese Cinema Encyclopedia: The Sex Films*, the Italian-Japanese co-production of *Garden of Eden* (1981), also known as *Giardino dell'Eden*, is not so much a pornographic work as a Franco Zeffirelli-esque tale of young love between Alessandra, the seventeen-year-old daughter of an illustrious art dealer, and Michael, a teen tearaway from a family of petty thieves, who are brought together by a stolen wallet and an Etruscan vase. Weisser is right to draw comparisons with the Brooke Shields vehicle *The Blue Lagoon* (1980), but his interpretation of

what actually occurs between the “two youths who burst into puberty and become sexually aware of each other’s bodies after being stranded on a deserted island”²⁴⁶ would appear to have more to do with wishful thinking than anything that occurs onscreen. What actually happens is that Michael engineers a night away for the overprotected daddy’s girl at a secluded beach he knows, and then pretends his motorbike is broken, forcing her to stay with him (it is not even his motorbike in fact – he stole it.) Within this idyllic setting, where the class divide means nothing (the Eden of the title), she eventually succumbs to his crude advances and there ensues a surfeit of slow-motion sequences of the two running naked hand-in-hand before the outside world, represented by both their families, intrudes upon their happiness. The brief moments of full-frontal nudity that develop from their discovery of one another’s blooming bodies, while presented naturalistically, are all obscured by the standard black blotches in Japanese release prints. However, following a playful nude body-painting session a few frames of the pubic regions of the aptly-named Leonora Fani did in fact make it to Japanese screens, so in this respect Masumura succeeded where Ôshima had failed.

A better-known name to overseas connoisseurs of highbrow adult art cinema was Shûji Terayama who, like Ôshima, emerged as one of the leading figures of the Tokyo avant-garde scene of the ‘60s, although his background was as a playwright and poet rather than a commercial filmmaker.²⁴⁷ Terayama has been mentioned in passing in previous chapters, but it is worth considering here that, just like Ôshima, his reputation abroad was largely established due to the strong sexual content of his later films. In 1979, he contributed one of the instalments of an omnibus movie called *Private Collections*, with the other sections directed by two men indelibly associated with high-gloss French softcore pornography, Walerian Borowczyk and Just Jaeckin. Its producer, Pierre Braunberger (1905–90), could boast of a career stretching back to the silent era, and had been instrumental in bringing the films of such luminaries as Jean Renoir, Robert Florey and Alain Resnais to the screen, but like Dauman he clearly had come to see sex as viable means of cinematic expression over the course of the ‘70s.

At 50 minutes in length, Terayama’s section, *The Grass Labyrinth*, was the longest of the three, and it was in fact eventually released as a standalone work in Japan, five years after it was made. A surreal trip into a young man’s pre-Oedipal subconscious as he searches for the second verse to a nursery rhyme his mother told him as a child, the film unravels in a series of dreamlike images filmed in the director’s customary prismatic spray of colours. It culminates in a scene that may have provided inspiration for Peter Greenaway’s *The Pillow Book* (1996), in which a girl’s naked body is adorned with calligraphic characters. The film is based upon a work by Kyôka Izumi

(1873–1939), whose stories had provided the raw material for works by, among others, Kenji Mizoguchi (the 1933 silent film *The Water Magician*) and Teinosuke Kinugasa (two late-career Meiji Period colour dramas, *White Heron* from 1958, and *Disordered Hair* from 1961). Many of Izumi’s works, as Seijun Suzuki’s disorienting adaptation of *Heat Haze Theatre* (1981) demonstrates, also relied heavily on a strong fantasy element. Incidentally, one of these also served as the inspiration for a degenerate feature made by Tetsuji Takechi at the tail end of his filmmaking cycle, a work that we might also ascribe as having an ‘international’ element. The story of a Buddhist monk taunted by a demonic temptress, *The Saint of Mount Koya* (1983), as Thomas Weisser writes, was filmed as a hardcore feature and released uncut, unfogged and altogether unexpurgated in the US territory of Guam, where Japanese obscenity laws didn’t apply. Here it played for over a year, mainly to Japanese tourists.²⁴⁸ It is unclear whether it was ever shown anywhere else, but it has certainly never been released in Japan, and therefore its details are unlisted in the usual sources, such as the JMDB. While there seems to be no one who has gone on record as having seen the film, a few internet sites do seem to offer telecined bootlegs of this *maboroshi* title, so one can only assume it must actually exist.

Terayama’s next French co-production gave producer Anatole Dauman another chance at creating an arthouse hit on the same scale as *In the Realm of the Senses*. *Fruits of Passion* (1981) was loosely based on the novel *Retour à Roissy*, first published in 1969 and written by Pauline Réage as a sequel to her infamous 1954 work, *Histoire d’O*. The first book had been the subject of a glossy cinematic makeover by Just Jaeckin in 1975, which was considered something of a triumph in peddling a young woman’s sadomasochistic fantasies to mainstream audiences. In Terayama’s filming of the sequel, the action is relocated to a brothel in the Chinese concession of Shanghai²⁴⁹ during the late 1920s, a time of political turmoil for China. It is here that the two main characters from the original story arrive at the beginning, as Sir Stephen, played this time by Klaus Kinski, is accompanied by his personal sex slave O, whom he immediately locks up in a rudely-furnished boudoir in his brothel for training. The girl’s one-character



above and opposite top: Scenes from Nagisa Ôshima’s *Empire of Passion* (1978).
© 1976, Argos Films - Ôshima Productions

designation is meant to symbolise her near-nothing status as a receptacle for male pleasure: 'O' for Object, or 'O' for a 'hole'. Played by the sad-eyed and bruised-looking French actress Isabelle Illiers, O spends virtually the entire length of the film unclothed, and unsurprisingly catches a cold about an hour into proceedings. Meanwhile, wedged between the scenes of her ritualised humiliation is a subplot involving a coolie rebellion brewing in the local restaurant beneath the shuttered room that is her prison. The pent-up resentment of the seething local populace towards the decadent Europeans is personified by a besotted young local lad who can't afford to patronise O, though by the end of the film the unjust positions of power have been overturned.

An inflated international co-production it might have been, but *Fruits of Passion* is pretty minor Terayama. One can't really put it much better than Roberta Novielli in her overview of the director's career, in which she describes it as "shallow and decadent".²⁵⁰ With its wafer-thin plot, its charms are mainly cosmetic: the exotic Chinese costumes and baroque sets; the elaborately fabricated instruments of sexual torture; the flamboyantly adorned painted whores who inhabit Sir Stephen's seraglio; the stylistic tic carried over from Terayama's previous features of gilding the images with oily swirls of psychedelic colour. Meanwhile, the dialogue delivered by its international cast, including a superfluous narration from Georges Wilson, is all post-dubbed in detached monotones to a deadening effect, and the symbolism is leaden and obvious: O's plight is likened to that of a caged bird, while the city scenes outside this pleasure palace are filmed in muted shades of grey in juxtaposition with the lurid interiors. Fortunately, several of the performers manage to rise above the banality of the script, including the famous drag queen and star of Toshio Matsumoto's *Funeral Parade of Roses* (1969), known as Peter (real name Shinnosuke Ikehata), who plays the poised and elegant madam supervising the perversion. Klaus Kinski also approaches his scenes with considerable zeal. According to his colourful, if somewhat unreliable, memoirs *Kinski Uncut*, his sex scenes were all unsimulated; no real surprise given the inclusion of one hardcore sequence as O is forced to fellate one of the harem attendants.²⁵¹

With such scenes, which were of course obscured in the Japanese release, *Fruits of Passion* highlights a trend manifested by many of these French-produced works; namely it was easier to pass off images that would otherwise be the reserve of the porno theatre as 'art' cinema for highbrow audiences if they came packaged in the form of a political metaphor. And so subtexts about positions of power, invasion, the evils of state censorship and so on made up a crucial component of many of these Japanese co-productions. These are the same themes dealt with in many of the films detailed in this book, but the difference was that they were now being

delivered to a wider global audience outside of Japan, and the eased censorship conditions meant there were fewer impediments in the filmmakers' visual vocabulary.

There were a few potential problems in this. The first was that filmmakers could only take these basic ideas so far before they ultimately repeated themselves, and the second was that foreign audiences were generally not all that familiar with the finer details of Japan's culture and history, nor Japanese filmmakers' own interpretation of it, especially when the themes were delivered with an ambiguous narrative approach customary to Japanese artistic expression. Put concisely, the films were generally less explicit in what they meant than what they actually showed.

One perhaps can't think of a finer example than the Japanese-German production of *The Woman with the Red Hat* (1982), or perhaps we should say *Die Frau mit dem roten Hut*, because the film doesn't appear to have been released in any English-language countries. In fact, surprisingly, it barely seems to be known in the West at all, yet it is particularly relevant to this discussion because it brings together two of this book's central characters, Kôji Wakamatsu and Tatsumi Kumashiro.

As with *World of Geisha*, Kumashiro works from another 'unofficial' piece of erotic literature published underground during the 1920s, this time attributed to *Rashomon* writer Ryûnosuke Akutagawa (1892–1927).²⁵² The story's narrator is a young Japanese man, referred to in the credits simply as 'I', who is invited to join an older acquaintance named Tôno in Munich during the period of the early Weimar Republic. The social and structural ruin of Germany at this time is more than matched by the moral ruin of its subjects. An opening scene shows a mob of thieves, one with his legs missing, wheeling himself around on a trolley, ransacking a nobleman's city dwellings. The shattered economy and rampant inflation has its benefits for its foreign visitors however. There's a carnival atmosphere about town, with street performers at every corner and the women of the city offering other more enticing forms of entertainment. Foreign currency presents a powerful means of entry into this decadent world, and yet it will only take one so far.

While his older colleague Tôno shows little reticence when it comes to bedding an endless bevy of blonde mädchen, the young Japanese man becomes immediately fixated upon one particular item when, not long after his arrival, he catches a fleeting glimpse in the street of a mysterious young beauty wearing a striking red hat. To a lonely foreigner unable to speak the language, she represents a seemingly unattainable fantasy, but nevertheless, one that can at least be bought temporarily. After surreptitiously slipping her some money, he allows himself to be led into a wooded park area, but the liaison ends in bitter disappointment as, after stripping him naked beneath the trees, she cruelly abandons him.

By chance the narrator later encounters her again, riding in a train carriage, and unable to understand her protests, obsessively follows her through the streets to her home. After waiting outside her apartment for a while, he impetuously bursts through the door and begins undressing, seemingly indifferent to the presence of the woman's lover, an actor with dreams of a career in Hollywood, who stands stiffly in the living room fixing him with a steely gaze. A psychological battle begins as the German man immediately lays claim to his blonde mistress by stripping off her clothes, unbuttoning himself and taking her roughly on the bed in front of the wide-eyed visitor from overseas, before tidying himself up and jumping in the waiting car outside.

The humiliation only serves to strengthen the Japanese man's ardour. But even after the removal of this rival, the Teutonic beauty still remains an aloof and distant fantasy who, while quite content to let him trail continuously behind her, openly consorts with other men, including a cyclist in training for the next Olympics. As the language barrier and foreign mannerisms shift from being a source of frustration to one of fascination, however, the apex in this bizarre love triangle begins to shift. The cyclist is pushed to the sidelines and the new couple move into a dilapidated castle that belonged to the woman's father, to begin an obsessive relationship based solely on sex. Like Kishi and Sada in *In the Realm of the Senses*, the world outside dissolves, but only temporarily. As swastikas appear on banners in the streets with the rapid rise of Hitler's National Socialist Party, the woman's head is easily turned, and she shifts her affections without warning to a young Nazi officer, abandoning the young Japanese man.

The Woman with the Red Hat often feels like a Germanic re-run of Ōshima's earlier film. Here the *ni-ni-roku* incident finds its equivalent in Hitler's failed *coup d'état*, the Munich Putsch. To root the film in the era in which it is set, an imaginary scene of Robert Wiene's landmark of expressionism *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* being filmed is included (although anachronistically so, as this film came out in 1919, some years before the period depicted here), while the narrator's story comes to an end after the departure of his fantasy figure as he picks up a German newspaper and reads of the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923 – a year often viewed as the historical point after which nationalism began to take root in Japan too. Is the film drawing attention to this apparent synchronicity, or perhaps making a bolder statement?

We might best describe Kumashiro's film as a calculated attempt from the business-minded Kōji Wakamatsuto to echo the success of *In the Realm of the Senses*, and also to try and establish links with one of the largest film markets in Europe. In this, Wakamatsu was actually joined by another figure as co-producer –



above: Shūji Terayama's sumptuous but shallow *Fruits of Passion* (1981).
© 1981, Argos Films - Terayama Productions

Masato Hara, here working on his first ever production. Hara much later scored a huge hit as the executive producer for the *Ring* films and a number of other J-horror titles that followed the success of this 1998 landmark from Hideo Nakata. He also served as executive producer on another Japanese-German collaboration that dealt with the touchy subject of the war, Masahiro Shinoda's *Spy Sorge* (2003), an epic about the Russian spy Richard Sorge, who was active in both countries. At the end of the day, *The Woman with the Red Hat* proved a failed experiment, coming out in Germany two years after its Japanese release and failing to make much of an impact anywhere. There are a number of probable reasons for its failure. Firstly, the Germany side of the production, handled by Horst Schaffer and Georg Utto of a company called Monopteros,²⁵³ lacked a producer with the acumen, aplomb and connections of Anatole Dauman. Secondly, the mutual fantasy regard in which the French and Japanese seem to hold one another was clearly not shared by the Germans, while for other markets across the world, unlike the French product, German cinema of this era was not seen as a particularly seductive proposition. Thirdly, not only did Kumashiro not have Ôshima or Terayama's international presence, but his style in this film is sprawling and, more importantly for a film of this kind, only sporadically sexy. For a director who made his name in this genre, he surprisingly fails to take advantage of the laxer censorship climate provided through working in Europe, shooting lengthy scenes as if delivering his usual meta-commentary on the hypocrisy of censorship (i.e. in long shot, occluded behind lampshades and pieces of furniture). But most critically, the message behind the film is confused and easily misinterpreted. Is it really inferring that Japan was seduced into militarism by this fellow Axis power?

And so the story of overseas erotic productions from Japan ends with the same figure it started with, Kôji Wakamatsu, who less than two decades before had headed to Hawaii to handle the first overseas Japanese *eroduction* shoot, and even after he'd long left such roots behind him, then headed to sunnier climes on a couple of further occasions, including a trip to Queensland, Australia to shoot *Singapore Sling* (1993), in which Yoshio Harada fights shoulder-to-shoulder with the aborigines against a group of local rednecks, in what might be described as *Battles Without Honour and Humanity* meets *Walkabout*.

The market for large screen sex films in the West, Japanese or otherwise, shrunk with the arrival of video, and films like the foreign productions directed by Ôshima, Terayama and Ikeda became commercially unviable within a very short period of time. As the economy began to boom dramatically over the course of the '80s, the industry as a whole would be more likely to invest money into foreign productions rather than send its creative agents overseas to make their

own films. For casual viewers in the wider world, a tangible sense of any kind of international presence to Japanese cinema began to wane.

Meanwhile, forced into ever-greater excesses by the arrival of the new home-viewing technology of video, the type of films being made for local consumption by Japanese *pinku eiga* and Roman Porno filmmakers were rapidly becoming unexportable. So far we have mainly focused on developments during this period at the higher end of the market. It is now time to turn our attention back once more to what was happening at a more grassroots level in the pink film industry.

Footnotes

¹⁸⁵ Yamada, Keizô. 'Kaigai e yushutsu sarete iru to iu ga'. *Pinku Eiga Hakusho*. pg 196.

¹⁸⁶ Domenig, Roland. "What Did Western Moviegoers See If Not Kurosawa, Mizoguchi, and Ozu? Some Remarks on the Distribution of Japanese Movies in the German Speaking Countries." Paper delivered at Kinema Club VIII conference in Frankfurt, 19-22 April, 2007.

¹⁸⁷ All this information can be found on the website www.filmevona-z.de

¹⁸⁸ www.bfi.org.uk/filmtvinfo/ftvdb/

¹⁸⁹ *Time Out* (London), 31 July-5 August, 1971: 56

¹⁹⁰ *Time Out* (London), 24 December, 1970. See <http://cinematreasures.org/theater/18275/>. According to the website Cinema Treasures, this venue was taken over by the Tatler Film Club on 3 August, 1969 and began screening uncensored adult films, starting with the title *I, a Woman*. Occasionally it also screened non-sexual films that had been refused a British Board of Film Censor's certificate, such as Roger Corman's *The Trip*. The film referred to as *I Am a Woman* might be Herschell Gordon Lewis's 1968 film *Alley Tramp*.

¹⁹¹ <http://ftvdb.bfi.org.uk/sift/title/296482>. There are entries for MUKAI Hiroshi, NUKAI Hiroshi and MUKAI Kan in the BFI database.

¹⁹² *Continental Film Review*. "Murder Abroad: Delectable Corpus Delecti" December 1962. pg 28-29

¹⁹³ *Continental Film Review*. "The New Japan" October 1962. pg 22-23

¹⁹⁴ *Continental Film Review*. "Japan: Land of Contrasts" June 1962. pg 18-19.

¹⁹⁵ *Continental Film Review*. "Eroticism in the Japanese Cinema" July 1969. pg 13.

¹⁹⁶ *Continental Film Review*. "A Japanese Godard" August 1969. pg 10.

¹⁹⁷ *Continental Film Review*. "In Old Japan" December 1969. pg 20-21.

¹⁹⁸ *Continental Film Review*. "Censorship and Sex: Confrontation in Japan" September 1972. pg 14-15.

¹⁹⁹ *Continental Film Review*. "A New Sex Drama 'The Insatiable' starring Sandra Jullien and Reiko Ike" February 1973. pg 14.

²⁰⁰ *Continental Film Review*. "Love in Japan" March 1973. pg 5.

²⁰¹ *Continental Film Review*. "Japan: Ancient and Modern". Ibid. pg 26.

²⁰² See <http://cinematreasures.org/theater/17383/>. The two titles listed have been identified as the German films *Jagd auf Jungfrauen* (1973) directed by Hans-Joachim Wiedermann and *Sonne, Sylt und kesse Krabben* (1971) directed by Jerzy Macc.

²⁰³ <http://ftvdb.bfi.org.uk/sift/title/199434>

²⁰⁴ The story can be found in the catalogue of the 2004 Puchon International Fantastic Film Festival, pg 124-127.

²⁰⁵ The Japanese title translates as 'Girl Students' Confidential Report'.

²⁰⁶ In fact New Select later became Albatross Films and moved into distributing some of the more extreme horror titles on video, including many of the Italian cannibal films, and Jörg Buttgerit's *Nekromantik*. See www.albatros-film.com/profile/history.html (Japanese)

²⁰⁷ The Yô-Pin Exhibition page on the website www.5b.biglobe.ne.jp/~madison/worst/treasure/pink.html has images of the original posters of a number of foreign porn films.

- 208** See Mukai's biographical details on www.kuruma.org/mukai/profile.html (accessed July 2007)
- 209** *Seijin Eiga* 34. 1968. pg 10-11
- 210** Ma, Karen. *The Modern Madame Butterfly: Fantasy and Reality in Japanese Cross-Cultural Relationships*. Pg 76. The book, one of many written by Amy Yamada touching on the lives of black servicemen, apparently "shocked the literary world with its explicit depictions of sexuality" and appealed to many young Japanese women at the time who, like Yamada, felt attracted to black men because of their shared outsider status and thought "the bases to be the closest thing to a foreign land available in Japan".
- 211** http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christina_Lindberg
- 212** Interview with Kevin Gilvear for the DVD Times website. www.dvdtimes.co.uk/content.php?contentid=60739. updated 10/03/2006.
- 213** Released in Japan as *Shikijô nikki* (trans. *Lust Diary*).
- 214** I am indebted to Roland Domenig for this information.
- 215** This is my transliteration from the katakana listed in the JMDB: Tiäre Uddo, Heren Kyanudi, Rarufu Supensâ. The actors are not listed as appearing in any other Japanese films.
- 216** *Suêden poruno: yokujô shotaiken*.
- 217** The katakana transliterates to Kurisutaru Horuguren.
- 218** *Injû no modae*.
- 219** *Inn of Perverted Beasts* has its cast and credits details listed on pg 91, though with no images, synopses or further explanation, while *Drops of Honey* is similarly referenced on pg 100.
- 220** According to the Wikipedia entry for the film (accessed 24 July, 2007) there's a bit of a story behind this title, which accounts for its UK DVD re-releases after the new millennium dropping the 'In' to give *The Realm of the Senses*, the originally desired title. Apparently "the designer of the English-language materials for the film assumed that the "in" (*dans*) in the French-language production material was not referring to the stars who were *in* the film, but was a part of the title of the film itself."
- 221** Daiei's studio facilities continued to function independent of the original company long after it dissolved as a production-distribution enterprise.
- 222** Gerber, Jacques (trans. Paul Willemen). *Anatole Dauman: Pictures of a Producer*. London: BFI Publishing, 1992. pg 9.
- 223** Ibid. pg 7. Note that the Wikipedia entry accessed on 23 July, 2007 states the company was formed in 1951.
- 224** Ibid. pg 137. It is not clear which countries are encompassed within Dauman's definition of "the West".
- 225** Ôshima, Nagisa. *Cinema, Censorship, and the State*. "Theory of Experimental Pornographic Film" pg 258. The essay is reproduced from the film book *L'empire des sens* (pg 127-146), although its title appears to have been mistranslated from the Japanese "Taikenteki poruno eiga-ron"- 'taikenteki' in fact means 'experienced' (as opposed to 'watched'), and not experimental.
- 226** Gerber, pg 137-138. Ôshima's quote is reproduced, although slightly reworded, so that, for example, 'porno' becomes 'pornographic film'.
- 227** Interview with Ôshima contained in Gerber, pg 142. It is not actually clear from this source who conducted the interview, though it is stated that it was "on the release" of the film.
- 228** Ibid. pg 146.
- 229** Richie, Donald. *Public People, Private People: Portraits of Some Japanese*. Kodansha America: New York, 1996, first published 1987. pg 33-35.
- 230** A cursory look at the User Comments section of the Internet Movie Database, for example, reveals a preoccupation with this "Art vs. Porn" debate.
- 231** Ôshima, Nagisa. *Cinema, Censorship, and the State*. "Text of Plea" pg 265.
- 232** Interview with Ôshima contained in Gerber, pg 142.
- 233** One writer who has compared the two versions is Marran, Christine, in the article "Cinematic Sexualities: The Two Faces of Abe Sada in Japanese 'Poruno' Film". *Asian Cinema*, vol. 8, no.2 (Winter 1996/97). pg 81-90.
- 234** Interview by author on September 2004 included on Artsmagic's DVD release of *Angel Guts: Nami*.
- 235** Ôshima, Nagisa. *Cinema, Censorship, and the State*. "Sex, Cinema, and The Four-and-a-Half-Mat Room", pg 250.
- 236** Ibid.
- 237** *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, 1994.
- 238** Allsop, Samara Lea argues this point in her essay on the film in *24 Frames: The Cinema of Japan and Korea*. London: Wallflower Press, 2004. pg 103-109.
- 239** Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil*, pg 156.
- 240** Though the film is on DVD in the UK ostensibly uncut, this particular scene, which is integral to the film, is optically reframed to avoid the possibility of prosecution under the Protection of Children Act. In the US version released on VHS in 1991, the scene is omitted entirely.
- 241** Ôshima, Nagisa. *Cinema, Censorship, and the State*. "Theory of Experimental Pornographic Film" pg 265.
- 242** His Plea for Defense is included in *Cinema, Censorship, and the State*. pg 264-286.
- 243** Berry, Paul. "Empire of the Censors (Comparing Various Censored Versions of Empire of the Senses)". In this paper delivered at Kinema Club VIII conference in Frankfurt, 19-22 April, 2007, Berry analyses exactly how much and what has been cut from numerous releases, both theatrical and video/DVD, around the world. He draws attention to the fact that there is often some discrepancy between stated time on the video cover and the timed length. One also has to take into account the different frame rates between video and film, making it difficult to detect if footage in various releases is actually missing except in the most extreme cases. The JMDB cites a running time of 104 minutes for the Japanese release, while according to the website of the British Board of Film Classification, the submitted print of their 'complete' version had a running time of 108m 22s, calculated from the measured length of the print of 9756+11 (feet+frames). The longest version available to date is the 2003 DVD release from Arte Video, with a stated length of 111 min, though a timed length of 103 min 30 sec. Alternative versions of sex scenes are available in this version in an interactive format, by pressing a button when a red dot appears in the lower right-hand corner of the screen.
- 244** Ôshima, Nagisa. *Cinema, Censorship, and the State*. pg 264. Essay reproduced from the film book *L'empire des sens*, pg 127.
- 245** The verb *sasagu* meets 'dedicated' in the sense of being offered up, given up or sacrificed.
- 246** Weisser, Thomas. *Japanese Cinema Encyclopedia: The Sex Films*. pg 178.
- 247** Sorgenfrei, Carol Fisher, *Unspeakable Acts: The Avant-garde Theatre of Terayama Shuji and Postwar Japan* (University of Hawaii Press, 2005) is currently the best introduction in the English language to this important and highly fascinating figure.
- 248** Weisser, Thomas. *Japanese Cinema Encyclopedia: The Sex Films*. pg 67.
- 249** The voiceover on the English language version doesn't really make clear if this is Hong Kong or Shanghai, although the Japanese synopsis and title of the film states this is Shanghai. However, the credits state that a few exterior scenes were shot in Hong Kong, even though it was mainly filmed at Shochiku's Ôfuna studios.
- 250** Novielli, Roberta. "Terayama Shûji – The Prying Glance". Vienna International Film Festival retrospective catalogue, *Art Theatre Guild*. pg 49.
- 251** *Kinski Uncut: The Autobiography of Klaus Kinski*. Bloomsbury, 1997.
- 252** Incidentally, there were three such notorious unsanctioned novels anonymously published in the '20s and '30s, when censorship of sexual material was notoriously strong. Alongside Kafû Nagai's *Under the Four-and-a-Half Tatami Sliding Door* and Akutagawa's *Woman with the Red Hat* was Yurakucho Night Scene (*Yurakuchô yakei*), written by Gate of Flesh author Taijirô Tamura (1911-1983). In 2002, all three were filmed by a director known as Seisoku Kajita as 50-minute low budget films intended for the video market, though they did receive a token theatrical release in Tokyo's Theatre Ikebukuro.
- 253** These two 'associate producers' seem to later have gone into television production, and Monopteros only ever produced this one film.



Oiran (1983), Tetsuji Takechi's pornographic take on the works of the celebrated novelist Junichirō Tanizaki, combines his two early tales *Tattoo* and *The Turnout with a Human Face*.
©Takechi Pro

I Am Curious (Pink) – An Industry in Flux

Getting an angle on developments within the world of the pink film in the aftermath of Roman Porno's arrival is a bit tricky. Whereas it is relatively easy to gain access to a broad range of Nikkatsu releases, the output of the independent (*dokuritsu*) sex film production companies from this era, especially during the first half of the '70s, is particularly poorly served by DVD and video. This lacuna is not due to the companies at the time slowing down their output in reaction to the new threat; Nikkatsu distributed their movies through their own network of directly-run theatres, so even if the *eroduction* suffered a lull in attendances, the venues devoted to playing such films that emerged around the same time as Roman Porno still needed a steady stream of titles from their regular suppliers to fill the schedules. In fact, as already noted, it was the pink film companies who made up for the shortfall in Nikkatsu's output. No, it is simply a symptom of the transient nature of the pink industry that so little has been handed down to us nowadays. Once the films had completed their runs across the country, they were considered finished and done with.

According to company president Kôichi Gotô, Shintoho threw away almost all the prints and negatives of the films they distributed during the monochrome and part-colour era. "When you think about it now it seems an enormous waste, but it would have cost an enormous amount of money to preserve them and no one thought about these things in the same way we do now. It's a real shame, but that's the way it is."²⁵⁴ The pink film industry had completely switched to colour by 1974, and the negatives of the Shintoho films from this time onwards have all been kept for safekeeping in the storerooms of the laboratories that developed them. Many of the prints have been donated to the National Film Centre and thus are inaccessible to casual, non-academic viewers. Furthermore, as the '70s was also an era before the widespread possession of video decks, and as Gotô points out, "We could never have imagined at that time that porno films would ever play on television,"²⁵⁵ there are no video masters in existence for these films either.

This leaves us with two main problems. Though this period spawned a new generation of directors like Seiji Izumi, Genji Nakamura, Kazuyuki Izutsu and Banmei Takahashi – along with many, many others whose names have not been so well remembered – trying to compare or contrast differences in their approaches or choices of subject matter, or to chart some evolution throughout their respective oeuvres, becomes almost meaningless due to the limited number of titles available for viewing. Given the sheer number many of

them made, it might be misleading to assume that any one title is representative of a larger vision. Secondly, if the films and filmmakers deemed interesting for the purpose of this book are the ones that deviate from the norm, how can we establish what the norm was?

On an industry level, we can say a few things about the early '70s at least. For a start, the period saw a huge separation of the wheat from the chaff, with many of the smaller producers disappearing to leave just a handful of main players distributing their films – now routinely referred to as *pinku eiga* rather than *eroduction* – across the country. We've seen how the genre had begun in the early '60s with the provincial cinemas initially showing the early *eroductions* alongside lesser works from the major studios. By the end of the decade it was pretty clear what type of films were making money. As local exhibitors signed contracts with the larger pink distributors, by the early years of the '70s a nationwide circuit of over 300 theatres had been established. This was dominated by the two main chains of Shintoho and Ôkura Eiga, alongside lesser distributors like Million Film (founded in 1969 as the film production arm of Keitsû Production, a company formed after the war to run theatres and amusement venues, and which later expanded into other areas of the amusement and leisure sector).

Most of the better-known films from the second half of the '70s belong to Shintoho, and indeed, the period represented something of a golden era for the company. In its first decade, it had functioned (as Shintoho Kôgyô) firstly by distributing the large



above: Promo art for *Scoundrel* (1968), featuring a suspended Miki Hayashi: one of the many films produced by pink film stalwart Akitaka Kimata's company Pro Taka.

number of non-pink movies produced by the original Shintoho that had remained unreleased in the wake of its bankruptcy, and then by buying and releasing films in the western Kansai region which were being produced by other affiliated independent companies, like Kokuei or Roppô Eiga.²⁵⁶ It also produced its own films through its Tôkyô Kôei branch, including works by Shinya Yamamoto and Kiyoshi (aka Baku) Komori, a director from the original Shintoho who had worked alongside Ôkura Eiga until his costly 70mm Technicolor box office bomb, *The Pacific War and the Star Lily Corps*, sent the maverick producer down the *eroduction* route; Komori's later filmography sports titles such as *Naked Woman Hell* and *Absolutely Secret: Girl Torture* (both 1968). In 1972, Shintoho Kôgyô merged with Tôkyô Kôei to form the current Shintoho Eiga as we know it, with president Kôichi Gotô and the rest of his staff relocating from Osaka to Tokyo, where they shared Kokuei's offices in the Kyôbashi area. Over the next couple of years, Shintoho began to consolidate its network with that of Kokuei, Nihon Cinema and Aoi Eiga (the company founded by Giichi Nishihara), to create a new distribution network as a competitor to Ôkura's OP chain. Nihon Cinema's input was the most significant, in that it already had an expansive network of cinemas across the country, allowing Shintoho to expand its reach from the Kansai area. While backing away from distribution, Kokuei continued to produce films more or less autonomously, while traces of the assimilated Aoi Eiga remain in the familiar opening fanfare that accompanies the Shintoho logo. In terms of levels of production, the years between 1972-1976 represented a peak for Shintoho. It was releasing about 60 films annually (about three times as many as during the early 2000s).

There's another curious story from the time just before the establishment of the new Shintoho. Around 1969-71, in an attempt to get an edge on its competitors, some ingenious figure within the company came up with an inventive variant of a practice harking back to the very dawn of Japanese film history. The *rensa-geki*, or 'Chain Drama', first appeared in 1904, reaching its peak of popularity in 1908 and continuing in some remote rural areas until 1922. It was essentially a stage performance given by touring Shinpa theatrical troupes, in which film supplemented the live action. Drawing on the novelty of moving pictures, the stage performances of the interior scenes would often stop, at which time the projector would light up the screen to show pre-filmed exterior scenes from the play.²⁵⁷ The approach taken by Shintoho was the exact reverse. As the film toured across the country, it would be accompanied by several of its key performers. Come the relevant erotic moments, the film would stop and they would take their place in front of the screen to provide a

realer-than-reel experience for the audience. Unsurprisingly, this mixing of film with live floor shows was expensive to mount, and Gotô mentions there was also the added risk of insurance and possible injury to the performers, so it only lasted a couple of years at most.²⁵⁸

During the previous decade, Ôkura Eiga had been the only one of the *dokuritsu* companies to possess its own studio, located in Tokyo's Setagaya ward and a legacy from the original Shintoho company. However, this was closed in 1974. The location soon reopened as the Ôkura Land theme park, and to this day it operates as a leisure complex with bowling, batting and golf practice facilities.²⁵⁹ On 15 September, 1978, Mitsugu Ôkura passed away at the age of 78, at which point the company split into two separate branches, with one side focusing on the management of these leisure centres (with new branches opened in Fukushima, Odawara and Iida city in Nagano), and the other concentrating on the production and distribution of pink films. In 2001, this second branch was reorganised and renamed as OP Picture. To this day, OP produces the most films and owns the most theatres out of all the pink distributors, and we can probably attribute much of its continuing financial stability to the parent company's other interests. Distinct from OP's *pinku eiga* side of the business, Ôkura meanwhile operates the Meguro Cinema and Star Movie theatres in Tokyo, which screen both domestic and foreign mainstream movies.

Ôkura's company is not the only one whose survival can be attributed to complex mergers and acquisitions, and revenue generated outside of film production and distribution. If we look at the major companies like Toei, Toho and Shochiku, who all expanded into other markets like TV production, theme parks, pachinko parlours, real estate and financial services, one can surmise how marginalised the straightforward moviemaking business had become during the '70s and '80s. Certain aspects of how the studios made their money, be they pink or mainstream, are kept shrouded in secrecy to outside researchers, but it is clear to see that those companies that kept all their eggs in one basket simply didn't survive very long.

Let's look at the history of Million Film as an example. As mentioned, it was an offshoot of a fairly well-established company named Keitsû Production, set up as its film production arm. In 1976, this subsidiary branched out into two new subsidiaries: Joypack Film distributed foreign movies (mainly foreign sex films, or *yô-pin*), and lasted throughout much of the '80s; while the other company continued to produce domestic sex films (i.e. *pinku eiga*) under its old name until 1986. Meanwhile, in 1978 another subsidiary named Joypack Amusement was established, which merged the following year with

two separate unrelated companies, Mine Shôji and Las Vegas Shôji, to form Joypack Leisure, which dealt with other entertainments interests outside of the film industry. In 1983, the film exhibition, not production, arm of the original Keitsû Production split off and became Joypack Cinema, which in 1987 was renamed Humax. In 1989, all of these companies were assimilated into the Humax Group entertainments company, which, among other things, is involved in production and distribution, and operates a number of cinemas in Tokyo, including the Shinjuku Joy Cinema and Ginza Cine Pathos. But effectively Humax has had no direct involvement with the pink industry ever since.²⁶⁰

Several Million Film releases have been rescued from oblivion by the Japanese DVD company Ace Deuce Entertainment. It is not clear whether they have been selected because they in some way stood out from the hordes of other titles from the time, or if they are with us today simply due to a more Darwinian process of random chance, in that their prints fell into the right hands at the right time and were considered to be of good enough quality for release. Still, it seems highly likely that there are more prints surviving from where these releases were sourced. One of the primary points of interest about these films is that they are representative of a company other than Shintoho from this time, and that amongst their number are the two earliest examples of non-Nikkatsu sex films produced during the period after the pink industry had completely switched to colour that are available on a home-viewing format: *Yokohama Cheyenne: Woman Swamp Zone*; and *New Bride: Mixed Up Figure*, both from 1974.²⁶¹

The opening logo for both films – a brief shot of a black hawk perched against a backdrop of crashing waves – identifies the producers as Production Taka (*taka* means 'hawk'). More commonly referred to as Pro Taka, this family enterprise, founded by Akitaka Kimata, produced films for a number of distribution companies, but mainly Million Film. Kimata has been mentioned on several occasions thus far, but never in much detail. He was born on 26 March, 1915, making him a generation older than many of the other directors who set the *eroduction* ball rolling during the '60s. After majoring in sculpture at the Japan Specialist School of Fine Arts,²⁶² he ended up in the theatre world, working in the famed entertainment district of Asakusa as a writer and a performer, according to his memoirs, published in 1985, entitled *It Was Spring in Asakusa* (*Asakusa de haru datta*). Television provided his first chance to direct for the screen, and the means and justification to establish Pro Taka, through which in 1965 he contributed his first ever title to the burgeoning *eroduction* world, entitled *River of Flesh*. As noted in an earlier chapter, during this period pink films were typically financed by the distributors, not the production companies, which allowed Pro Taka to

keep up a typically prodigious rate of output throughout the next few decades. Kimata was at the helm, aided and abetted by his son Akiyoshi Kimata (born 25 September, 1946), and also by Rumi Tama, the pink actress who was to become his third wife and a woman we shall be seeing a whole lot more of in a later chapter.

It was the son, Akiyoshi, who directed both of these early Ace Deuce DVD releases, although he is better known under his professional name of Seiji Izumi, which he was to use throughout his career. Izumi is a director less worthy of note for the quality of his oeuvre than its magnitude – over a hundred films from his 1972 debut *Red Cave*, and with later commercial work following his mainstream debut *On the Road* in 1982 (distributed by Shochiku) including a number of yakuza movies for Toei and a new TV version of the series *Monkey* (*Saiyûki*, 1993), filmed in China for NHK and starring Rie Miyazawa and Masahiro Motoki.

Yokohama Cheyenne: Woman Swamp Zone follows two cocksure buddies as they swagger around the port of Yokohama. One of them, Gombei (played by one of the most ubiquitous male leads of the era, Masayoshi Nogami), the self-styled 'face' of the city, becomes involved in all sorts of scrapes after interviewing for a job at a magazine. *New Bride: Mixed Up Figure*²⁶³ centres around a shag-haired member of the *fûten-zoku* clique (meaning 'Vagabond Tribe' – Japan's answer to the hippies) named Tetsuya who, while out on the town one day taking surreptitious snapshots of girls with his camera, gets an eyeful of an elegant lady, dressed in black and wearing sunglasses and a fashionable wide-brimmed hat, shoplifting a ring from a jewellery stall. When he confronts her, she gives him the cost of the pilfered wares to pay back to the young college-age stallholder whom she stole it from, which in due course he does. But Tetsuya's immediate interest goes beyond bringing the older woman to justice, and after the woman confesses that it was loneliness that drove her to crime, the outcome of this chance encounter is not long in doubt. For a moment it seems as if Tetsuya is about to embark on an adulterous affair with this enigmatic beauty, but the following day she postpones their planned liaison, and hands him a map and key to the location of their next meeting. In the meantime, Tetsuya's wide-boy charm has earned him another fan in the form of the owner of the original jewellery store, Yukie, who leads him back to her railroad apartment. But Tetsuya has stirred up a hornets' nest with his early dalliances, and it soon becomes clear that the woman in black represents a particularly dangerous distraction.

The lightweight, easygoing approach of these early Million releases perhaps gives a misleading impression of Izumi's style, and that of the era in general. Filling their soundtracks with suitably hip

scores of foreign soul and jazz music, both possess a light and breezy charm that sets them apart from those discussed from the previous decade. They perhaps reflect a new, more light-hearted, era of youthful optimism, with the economy on the rise, a newer openness about sexual matters, and political concerns largely absent. Later we'll encounter another title by Izumi, which demonstrates how the pink film was also catering for stronger tastes, but even if such works presented a less politically contentious stance than those being made just a few years earlier, references to the '60s hadn't been dropped entirely, as can be seen by another picture made later in the decade by a different director.

Boasting a title that suggests something altogether rougher than the lightweight, almost whimsical tone that dominates all but the surprisingly touching final reel, Genji Nakamura's *Woman Crime Demon* (1977) presents an interesting slant on the Anpo struggles of the '60s. It features a young man named Tôru, who arrives in a small provincial town at the height of summer clutching a letter from his missing sister. However, the overwhelming level of the incidental noise dubbed onto the soundtrack hints that something is awry in this apparently idyllic setting: adding to the cacophony of chirping cicadas and clanging train crossing signals is the sound of planes screaming overhead, and anyone at all versed in the tropes of the genre will surely know what this means, even if they hadn't noticed the name on the sign of the train station at which Tôru arrives.

The setting for Tôru's traumatic collision with his past is the town of Fussa, established in 1970 and containing the Yokota military bases within its limits, as well as a host of bars, shops and restaurants to cater for the Americans stationed there. Just over ten years on from *Black Snow* and the surrounding population are no longer desperately prostituting themselves out to the GIs. The whole town seems to have succumbed wholeheartedly to what is framed through Tôru's eyes as a new and alien way of life. A group of three guys and two girls are living communally in the house to which the letter directed Tôru, engaging in lively free-love bouts around him while he sits awkwardly on the sofa waiting for his sister to come home. Moving on from this chaotic household, he fights off the advances of a horny housewife wearing a Star-Spangled Banner apron. In the meantime, his sister appears to have disappeared off the face of the planet, her presence felt throughout the film only in the form of a series of nostalgic flashbacks. In an ironic reversal of the part-colour practice of the '60s, these sentimental sequences of his nubile sibling in her school uniform stand out due to being filmed in monochrome in an otherwise full-colour film, lending them a quasi-incestuous air – a notion reinforced when one of her free-and-easy confidantes asks him

whether he has a "big sister complex". His greatest fears are confirmed when he finds her walking arm in arm with an Afro-American serviceman from the military base. She is immediately panicked by his appearance and runs off, but in one further flashback it becomes obvious why: just a few years previously the seemingly guiltless younger brother had assisted an older school associate in raping her. Within the twisted logic of the pink film, he is at least partially absolved due to the fact that at the beginning of the assault he wasn't actually aware who the victim was. Still, as both men were wearing masks, Tôru had mistakenly assumed she was unaware of his complicity and had repressed all memories of the incident, but with this chance encounter his feelings of guilt come welling to the surface.

With an altogether less aggressively assertive approach than its obvious referent, *Black Snow* (1965), and adding a further level of irony to the violation by showing its victim cleaning herself in the aftermath of the attack in the very same surf in which we'd seen the group of hedonistic youths frolicking earlier. Nakamura's film shows how the era had moved on from the days of Tetsuji Takechi, as if to suggest that, yes, modern Japan might not be quite as it once was, but it is ultimately responsible for its current state and it is too late to turn back now. The characters and setting feel like they have been lifted from novelist Ryû Murakami's epoch-defining debut, *Almost Transparent Blue*, published the year before. Murakami had actually lived in Fussa for two years from 1970 onwards, before writing his *taiyôzoku* tract for the post-Anpo generation, revolving around the sex-and-drugs-and-rock'n'roll lifestyles of a group of youngsters living within spitting distance of the Yokota base. It was not director Nakamura's only borrowing: it would be interesting to hear what the members of Pink Floyd think about the spacey instrumental 'One of These Days' that opens their *Meddle* album being used to add the exhilarating musical accompaniment to the climactic rape, or whether Thelma Houston is aware that her '70s disco classic 'Don't Leave Me This Way' can be heard in one of the disco scenes of GIs gyrating with local Japanese girls. Because of these music rights issues, it seems unlikely that this film, like quite a few others from the period, could ever achieve a wider release outside of Japan.

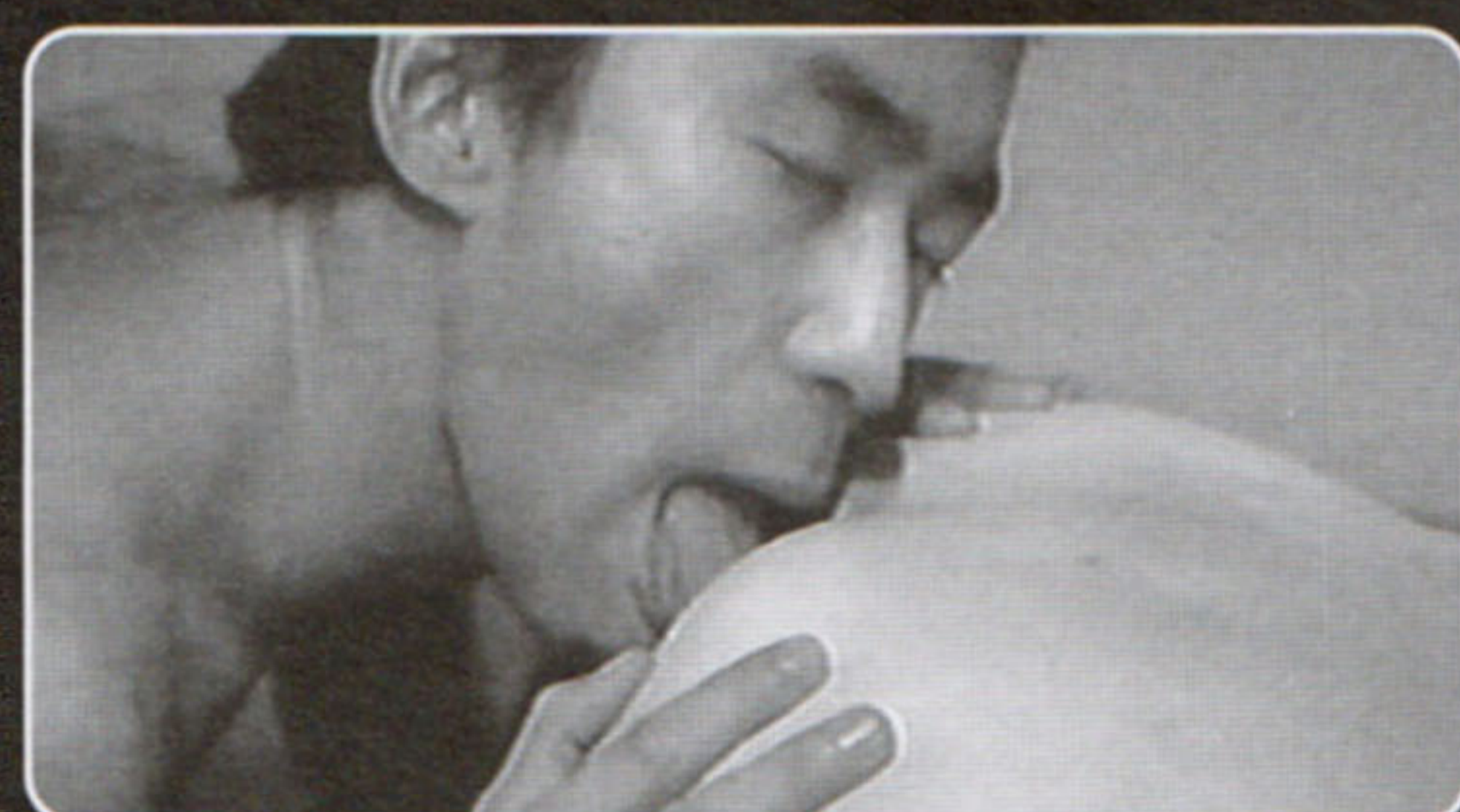
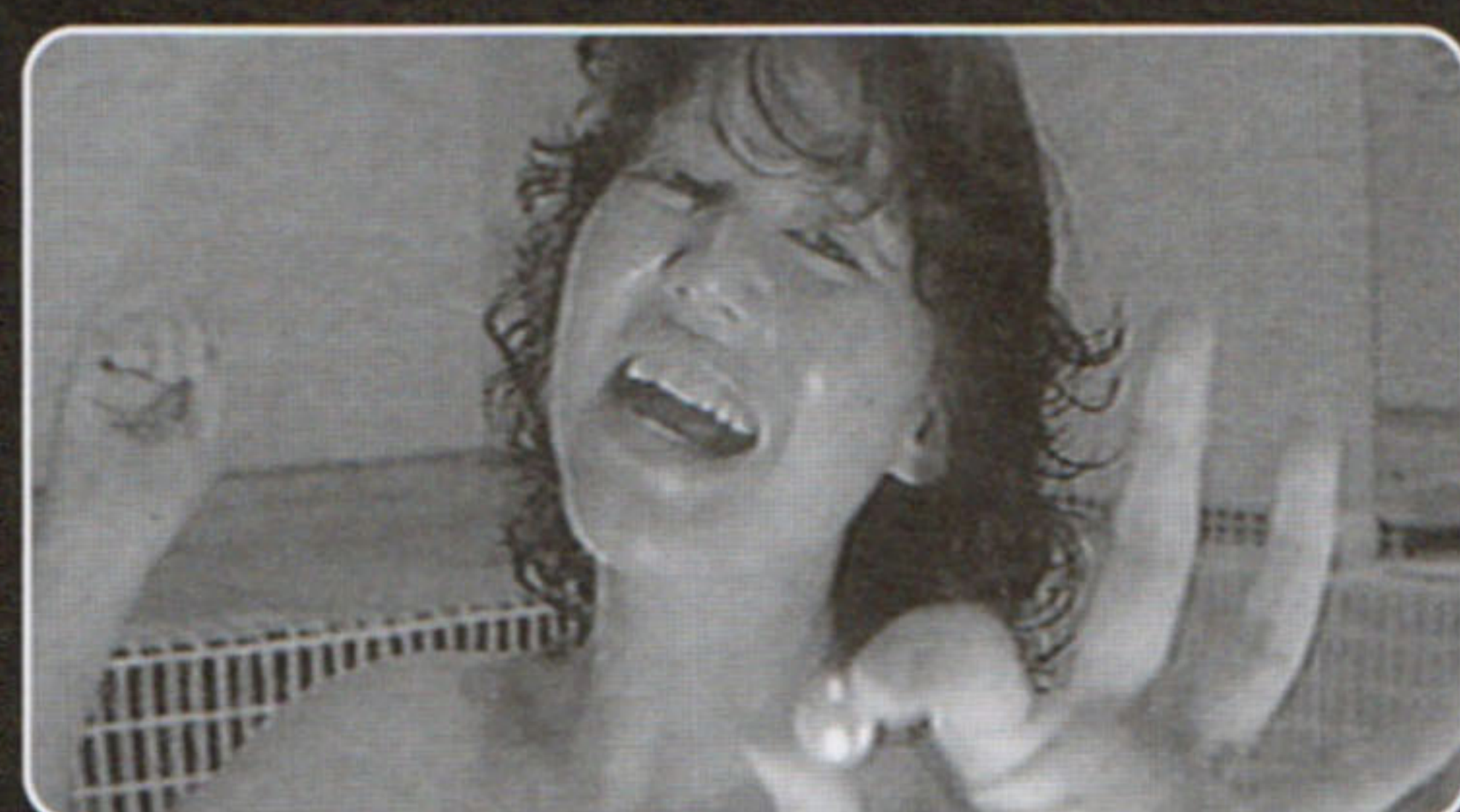
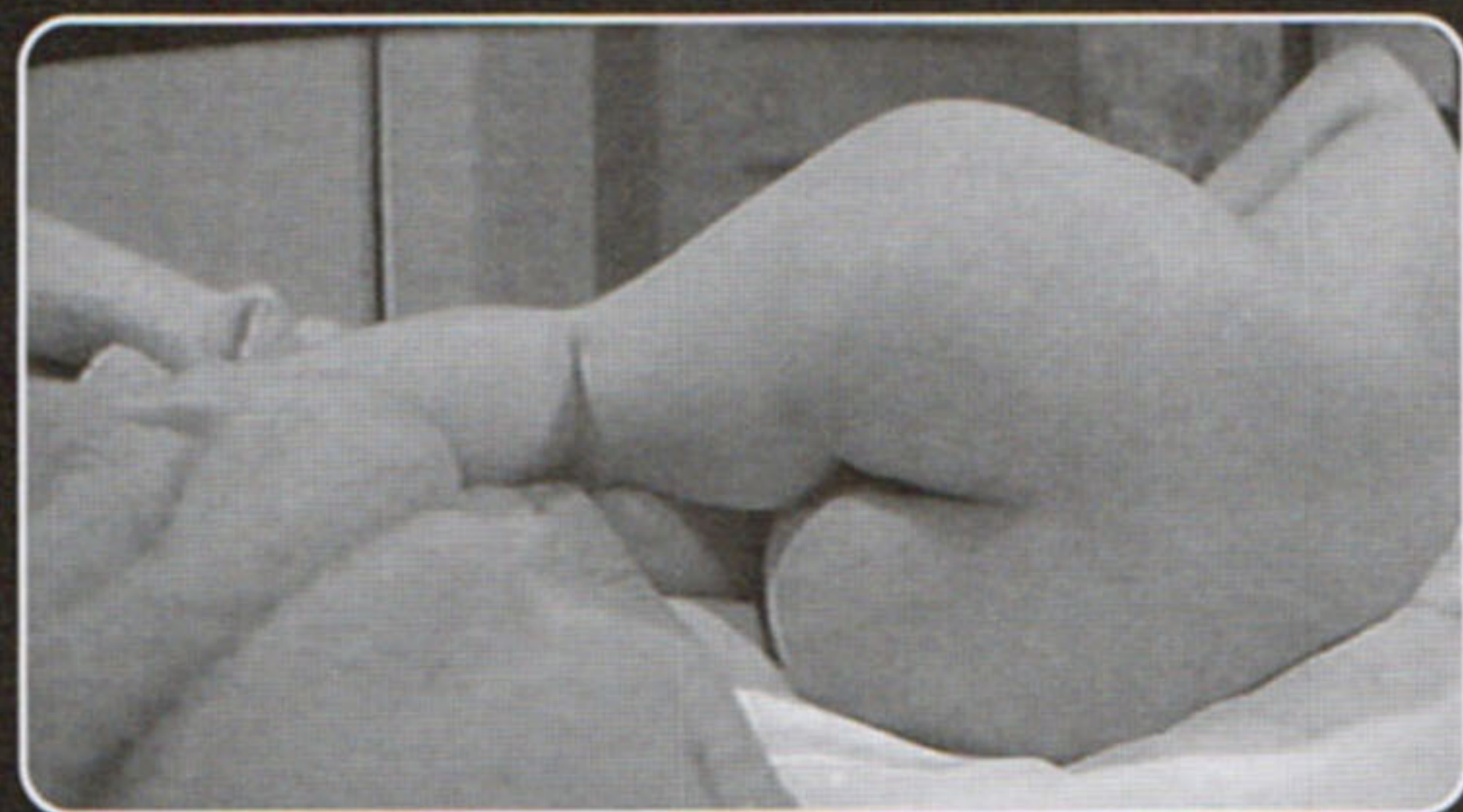
Genji Nakamura (Born 21 November, 1946), the director of *Woman Crime Demon*, was one of the major players in the pink industry during the '70s and '80s. Like Seiji Izumi, he boasted several hundred productions to his name. Although he deserves extra brownie points for coming up with such great titles as *Pachinko Guy: That Hole This Hole* (1978), with the odd exception, to the modern viewer his films seem a little workmanlike and lack any real sense of flair. Nowadays his main claim to fame is that, through his production

company Yû Pro, he 'discovered' and nurtured Ryûichi Hiroki, a director who, since leaving the pink industry in the late '80s, has achieved a considerable degree of success in mainstream filmmaking; the Haruhiko Arai-scripted duo of *Vibrator* (2003) and *It's Only Talk* (2005) in particular saw him garlanded with considerable acclaim both in and outside Japan. Hiroki was one of several directors to move on to bigger things after his early schooling in the pink industry, as we'll see later. Nakamura's activities in the mainstream filmmaking world, by contrast, haven't received as much notice. His 1982 comedy, *Weekend Shuffle*, is perhaps his best-known title, a comedy about a family whose youngest son, Shigeru, is kidnapped. Aside from the longer running time, the film's lowbrow humour and frequent nudity presented little which made it stand out from his more regular line of filmmaking.

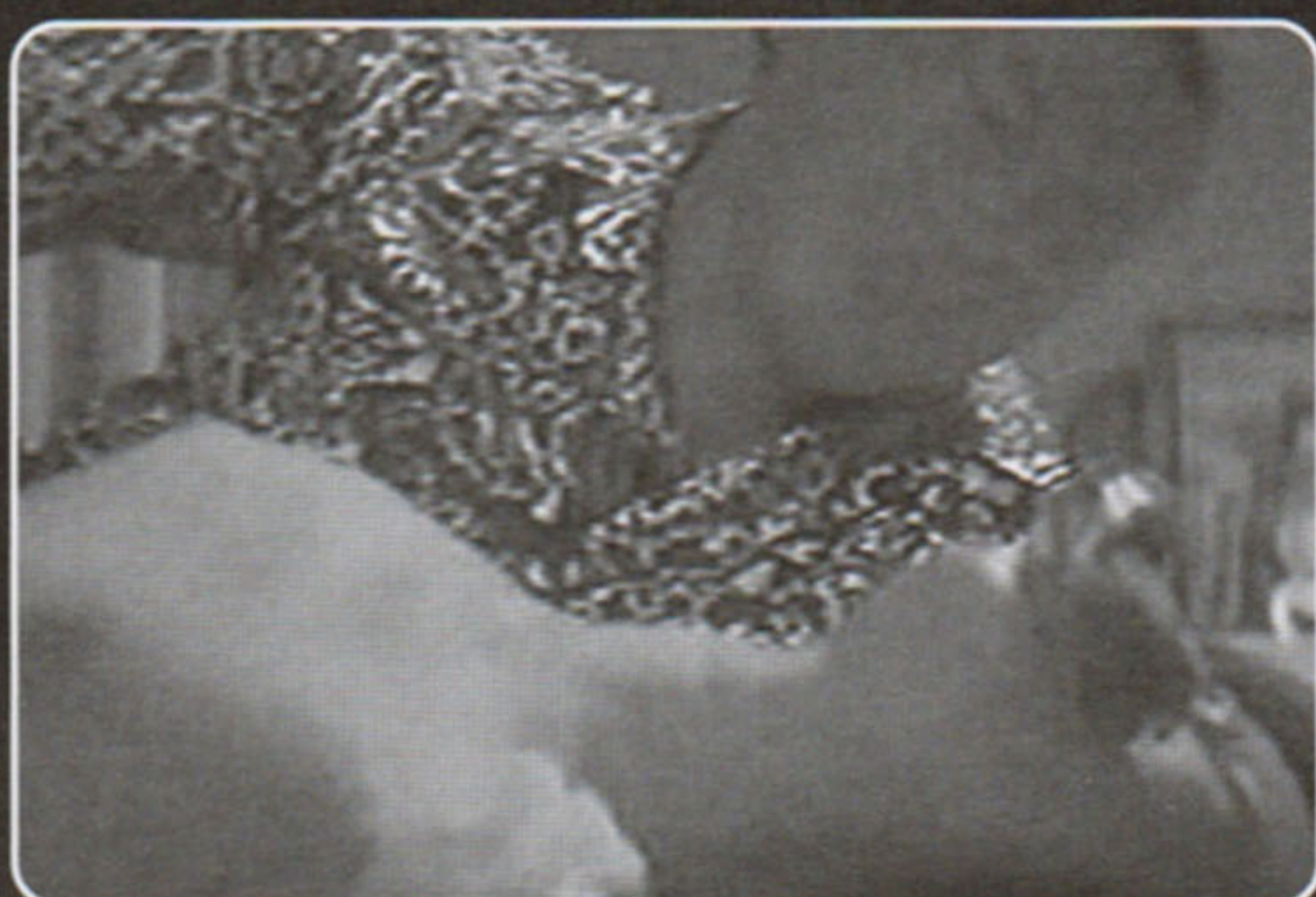
A more interesting director to emerge during this period was Kazuyuki Izutsu. Though not particularly well-known internationally, around the turn of the millennium Izutsu made a number of mainstream films that picked up a good degree of critical attention in Japan, including: *Boys Be Ambitious* (1996), which topped that year's Blue Ribbon Award and led to a low-budget sequel from Takashi Miike; the self-explanatory *Amateur Singing Contest* (1999), which played a number of international festivals; *Get Up!* (2003), a comedy about a yakuza boss with a taste for US soul legend James Brown; and *Pacchigi! (We Shall Overcome Someday)* (2004), a high school romance between a Japanese and a *zainichi* Korean set in 1968, voted best film of its year by the Kinema Junpô critics.

Born 13 December, 1952, Izutsu's path into the film industry gives an early, and rather unusual, demonstration of the role pink film played in giving young aspiring directors a break in the wider film industry. After experimenting with 8mm and 16mm film while still a high school student in Nara, he assembled a group of close friends under the banner of the Shinei Kurabu ('New Film Club') and went out and made his debut off his own bat, entitled *Go Go Might Guy: The Anguish of Sexual Awakening* (1975). Although it uses a number of established pink film performers, it was essentially an amateur production, and has been referred to as the first ever pink film *jishu eiga* (a term meaning 'self-made film', used to refer to a phenomenon we'll be looking at in a later chapter). As an industry calling card, it can be judged a success in that it was picked up and distributed by Million Film in 1977, and led to Izutsu directing several further works for the company.

One of Izutsu's tryouts in the genre is the bizarre *Assault Demon Pearl Torture* (1979), which features actor Takuma Ikeuchi as Shinzo, a drug-addicted low-ranking yakuza with a *koi* carp emblazoned across his back who, under the orders of his *aniki* ('older brother'; senior) rubs out the gang leader (*oyabun*) and



above: Some of the more bizarre scenes from Kazuyuki Izutsu's nightmarish yakuza sex movie *Assault Demon Pearl Torture* (1979).



absconds with the mob funds, making his way across the country to the provincial sex theatre owned by his partner-in-crime's family. Here, he ill-advisedly gets mixed up with the older gangster's woman. With its claustrophobic dark and grimy atmosphere, the film comes across a bit like a *pinku eiga* version of Takashi Miike's 'yakuza-horror' *Gozu* (2003), but while the one-line synopsis may not sound much like an archetypal sex film setup, *Assault Demon Pearl Torture* remarkably manages to cram in no fewer than four different encounters within the opening fifteen minutes. It opens in the apartment of an early conquest, who rouses from her slumber and sleepily uncurls on the bed, registering only the slightest hint of annoyance as Shinzo attempts to initiate sex by sticking a hairdryer between her thighs, before the phone rings with his orders to kill the gang boss. After heading to the *oyabun's* luxurious pad, Shinzo thrusts the muzzle between his victim's teeth and pulls the trigger. Meanwhile, quivering in fear, the boss's moll removes her scarlet lingerie and offers herself in return for sparing her life. Shinzo next books himself into a sparsely furnished traveller's inn to await further instructions from his *aniki*, and is immediately joined by a prostitute who attempts to rouse him from his drugged and shell-shocked torpor. Later, en route to his next destination, he hitches a ride in a truck. After parking up for the night, the driver treats him to the spectacle of him screwing a common streetwalker in the truck cab right in front of Shinzo's very eyes, while simultaneously attempting to engage him in normal conversation. The whore's wig comes off part way through the encounter to reveal a nightmarish bald head. These early encounters all occur in the very first reel, but reappear later in the film in the form of a series of feverish and cloying hallucinations in the protagonist's increasingly addled mind, as he makes his way from gloomy motel room to gloomy motel room and his habitual drug abuse begins to take its toll. The scenes in the adult theatre too – the obscene areas of a violent assault masked by dark patches of shadow on the cinema screen accompanied by the continuous flutter of the projector – possess a suitably sordid air, and also prove an inspiration for his compulsive fantasies as he is haunted by his sexual demons. For those wondering about the peculiar title, it derives from an eye-watering scene of the delusional gangster attempting to insert a pearl, bequeathed from an early sexual encounter, beneath his foreskin.

In its framing of the story from the increasingly disoriented perspective of its protagonist, *Assault Demon Pearl Torture* clearly manifests Izutsu's strengths as a filmmaker, and one with ambitions stretching beyond the adult film industry. He contributed around half a dozen films to this market, but had soon moved on to more mainstream

above: *Pinku eiga* at its most mean-spirited and thuggish: *Sex Document: Serial Rapists* (1975), directed by Seiji Izumi and featuring his own real-life step mother, Rumi Tama (top).

successes, such as *Kid's Capital* in 1981. He was also one of the members of an organisation called the Director's Company, which we'll be encountering in the next chapter.

Overall however, the pink film was generally not as inventive, experimental or enterprising as Izutsu's case suggests. Seiji Izumi's *Sex Document: Serial Rapists* (1975) provides a fairly good example of another of the courses taken by the genre. The title pretty much says it all: a film sporting rape as its main attraction, with the word 'serial' promising a certain regularity and a variety to the assaults, and the 'Sex Document' label implying a gritty realism to their depiction. Both aspects are easily realised on a modest budget, making the theme particularly well suited to filmmakers with limited financial resources and little creativity. In this work, and many like it, the structure is efficiently reduced to an episodic succession of brutalities against women, all introduced with a head-and-shoulders shot of their perpetrators seated handcuffed in a bare holding cell as they are grilled by the police and an external voice-of-god narration announces their names, ages and the exact nature of their crimes. And naturally it is these crimes that form the main attraction: a woman assaulted as she walks home along a remote country path by twilight, accompanied by an ominous bass throb on the soundtrack; a housewife in her own living room subdued with a Coca Cola bottle by a thug wearing a nylon stocking mask; a respectable-looking man using the ruse of returning a stray dog to its owner's home in order to worm his way past her front doorstep while her husband is away on business (the slimeball even tosses her a handle of bank notes to stop her reporting the crime after the wicked deed is done, a common occurrence in films of this type). The six assaults are all rendered in the same austere manner, and as a whole the film is surprisingly inexplicit in terms of its nudity. The sound of shredded underwear and frightened whimpers is evidently the intended stimulus, but there are other, less obvious, causes for concern here beyond the obvious ones of getting one's kicks from watching simulated rape scenes: one of the victims in this film is played by none other than Rumi Tama, the director's step-mother! Sigmund would surely have had a few things to say about that...

Izumi's film bears out what a cursory look at the evolution of the pink film in its first two or three decades suggests – that as the contents became less radical in the social or political sense, they became more radical in their depictions of graphic sex and violence. Another rule of thumb is that during the '60s, the titillatory aspects were interwoven into the fabric of the film itself. Moving into the next decade, as films settled into a new standard running length of an hour, the sex scenes developed into elaborate set pieces serving as an attraction in their own right, and the main purpose of the narratives was to link them.

As an indication of where the genre was headed by the end of the decade, there are few better examples to turn to than the films of Kôji Wakamatsu. His *Thirteen Serial Assaults* (1978) is considered a paragon of the rape sub-genre, and was amazingly popular upon its release. Given how in-tune with the politics of the time his earlier films had been, his later account of how and why it came to be made is interesting: "At that time, I had lots of police searching my offices, and all the Japanese journalists were writing a lot of bad stuff about me. I was under pressure, and no company would let me either shoot or would distribute my films."²⁶⁴ So far, so good. One might easily assume that, given how gloomy and depressing the end product is, *Thirteen Serial Assaults* in fact represents Wakamatsu's state of mind at the time, a violent assault on bourgeois mores, and a gesture of defiance. But, as he continues, "It is for that reason that I turned towards more commercial films. We wanted to make a film which pleased everybody. Lots of people appreciated the film, but I don't really understand too much why."²⁶⁵ So, while rape might have been used as a metaphor in certain pink films of the '60s, by the end of the following decade it was clearly acknowledged as a major lure in its own right, to be appreciated without any need for guilt or justification.

Wakamatsu at this time was having his films released through Shintocho, who pioneered another form of nastiness during their boom years in the mid-'70s with its Period Torture movies. Teruo Ishii's *Joys of Torture* films are often cited as the first exemplars of this particularly Japanese strain of eroticism, although these were preceded by another work from the *eroduction* sector some years before, in the form of the now-lost *Japanese Torture Punishment History* (1964). This was one of the many sex films helmed by the Shintocho old-timer Kiyoshi Komori after the public had lost their taste for his large-scale war movies. The new Shintocho's torture porn offerings proved highly successful at stealing a march on their competitors, and came graced with much higher budgets than average, lavish sets rich with period detail, and some of the genre's top directors behind the camera, including Wakamatsu, Kan Mukai, Shinya Yamamoto and Mamoru Watanabe.

The dubious appeal of these Shintocho films rested upon an accumulation of gruelling misogynist torture scenes, and as such they had their overseas counterparts, most obviously the SS death camp films instigated by Don Edmonds's *Ilsa, She Wolf of the SS* (1974), which led to a torrent of nasty Nazis and jackbooted hijinks in increasingly reductive efforts – mainly from Italy it should be pointed out – that included Cesare Canevari's *The Gestapo's Last Orgy* (1976), Sergio Garrone's *SS Experiment Camp* (1976), Bruno Mattei's *SS Girls* (1977) and Luigi Batzella's *The Beast in Heat* (1977). The main difference is that the

Japanese examples were generally better made and, unlike the Western product, whose kitsch humour and inept staging let the viewer off the hook to some extent by acknowledging the guilty pleasures that their spectacles were founded upon, they opted to play their perversions in a straight-faced fashion.

There's none of Shinya Yamamoto's characteristic playfulness in films like *Brutal Female Punishment Chronicle* (1976), for example, a fairly standard offering in this suspect sub-genre, whose plot consists of little more than various permutations of adulterous acts caught in all their ribald detail, followed by the subsequent punishments. Whereas in most cases for the male adulterer the aftermath of these *in flagrante delicto* sessions meant being abruptly, albeit bloodily, dispatched by the sword of whoever caught them, the more heinous fate awaiting the female partner was rendered with a gleefully lip-smacking gusto: victims dangle helplessly from the rafters in elaborate cat's cradles, arms strapped behind backs, naked bodies writhing as they are beaten with brutal-looking poles or bunches of split bamboo canes; tender rumps strain against rough jute chords; candles flicker against greased skin in darkly lit cells; molten wax runs in rivulets over bruised or broken skin, congealing with the victim's blood; sharp implements are jabbed between the soft white flesh of their thighs; kimonos are hiked up above waist levels and splayed buttocks presented to their persecutors.

In such torture films, bodies are warped, twisted and contorted to breaking point to reveal new and hitherto unknown aspects of the female form. Whether through pleasure or pain, as noted in previous chapters, the notion of a woman's posture or movements being invoked involuntarily by an external hand as if she were a puppet is a crucial component to such machismo fantasies, and it goes without saying that this animating hand is always a male one: this is one of the reason why lesbian acts, when they do occur, are seen as being so threatening to the films' vision that their participants cannot go unpunished. The torture victims frequently lose control over their functions, unleashing gushing jets of urine over the beatific faces of their examiners, and their acts of punishment frequently climax in exuberant sprays of crimson against the ivory white *shoji* walls of the backgrounds, or in rose petal-like drops of blood falling on the *tatami*. And of course, such period details as traditional coiffures being shaken loose, along with repeated stock soundtracks of *shamisens* and *shakuhachi* bamboo flutes, are crucial: along with the woodcut art of Edo torture scenes frequently intercut into the credit sequence, they attempt to bring a historical legitimacy to a very 20th Century spectacle, while situating them in a safely distant fantasy world of the past.

The limited repertoire of tortures trotted out from film to film lent them a ritual predictability, giving their directors little room to bring their own idiosyncratic twist to proceedings. That said, Wakamatsu's contributions had a notable political dimension in keeping with his usual stance. *Hundred Year Torture Chronicle* (1975) broke down its atrocities into three distinct stories set at key historical moments. In one section, set during the run-up to the war, agents from the Tokkô, or Special Higher Police, set about giving a woman with communist sympathies the third degree, while later, members of the Imperial Army are let loose in a prison cell in Manchuria.

This omnibus formula was a popular one, and used again in one of the most celebrated titles for fans of this type of thing, Banmei Takahashi's succinctly-titled *Japanese Torture* (1978), which features a memorable internal POV shot of one of its torture victims, a young woman caught in the midst of a lesbian act by her husband, punished by having her vagina sutured. After introducing Junko Miyashita to the Japanese adult film-viewing public in his own 1972 film, *Rape Escape Crime*, for Aoi Eiga, Takahashi made himself rather central to Shinto's enterprise during the decade, and if this film echoes the same confrontational approach to laying bare the more savage aspects of Japan's political history as found in the works of Wakamatsu, then it should be remembered that the two worked together quite closely during this period, with Takahashi providing the scripts for several Wakamatsu films, and Wakamatsu producing a number of Takahashi's, including *Japanese Torture*.

Takahashi's work within the pink genre seems to emblemise all the excesses of the late '70s and '80s product, and it is for these elements of his oeuvre that he is most likely to be remembered. In fact, at the time of writing, the one title of his available on DVD in the US, *New Love in Tokyo* (1994), while technically not a pink production, might just as well have been. Based on a photo book by internationally acclaimed photographer Nobuyoshi Araki,²⁶⁶ who briefly shows up in a cameo taking artistic snapshots of the main characters (the grainy black and white portraits punctuate the film), it depicts the ordinary lives of a couple of working girls, including one aspiring member of a theatrical troupe who moonlights as an SM dominatrix. The film featured some pretty strong scenes for the mainstream market, and was marketed in many countries as a sequel to *Tokyo Decadence* (1991), Ryû Murakami's bleak arthouse depiction of the hollow life of an SM call girl during the Bubble Years, based on his own novel *Topazu*.

To be fair, Takahashi made plenty of works outside of the pink genre. Like Izutsu, in the early '80s he migrated away from the adult program picture, at least partially, as one of the founder members of the Director's Company, where he made the critically-

regarded *Wolf* (1982). He made the horror film *Door* in 1988 and its straight-to-video sequel in 1991. His *Seraphim Night* (1996) mixed weird politics with even weirder sex, as an art teacher flees the country with her lover after they kill his brother and rival for her affections: their love is made that little bit more challenging when it is revealed that he is a *zainichi*, a Korean born and raised in Japan, while she/he is in fact a hermaphrodite. *Rain of Light* (2001) – which depicted the bloody breakdown of the radical left-wing political movement of an earlier era – we've already mentioned. Meanwhile, *Hi-Bi: Days of Fire* (2004) bore little traces of Takahashi's past in *pinku eiga* at all, recounting the true story of a traditional ceramicist who created Japan's first ever bone-marrow bank in order to save her son from dying of leukaemia.

Those with a more adventurous appetite for the rougher end of Japanese erotica under discussion here would be best advised to begin with the works of Mamoru Watanabe. For the first two decades, Wakamatsu and Watanabe's careers in the film industry ran more-or-less parallel to one another. Both came from the same TV directing background, both ended their careers in television after violent altercations with their producers, and both started working in the *eroduction* industry during the mid-'60s. Both collaborated at points in their career with the Nikkatsu scriptwriter-directors Atsushi Yamatoya and Chûsei Sone, and both wound up making films for Shintoho at the same time in the late '70s, also sharing the scriptwriters Banmei Takahashi and Kazuo 'Gaira' Komizu. Unlike Wakamatsu however, while he did make a few mainstream films – the most notable being *Gurenbana* (1993) starring Kôji Yakusho – Watanabe never really achieved much notice outside his chosen niche.

The first thing that immediately strikes one about Watanabe's work is its production values. The director made some of the most sumptuous, atmospheric and elegant pieces of Japanese erotic cinema outside of Nikkatsu's finest, and on considerably lower budgets too. In marked contrast to the raw approach taken by the Wakamatsu and Takahashi, his images came aestheticised to the utmost degree, with everything from landscapes, through the period details of costumes and furnishings, to the cruellest acts of sexual violence, lent the most sophisticated of veneers. For this aspect he received a due amount of criticism, but his highly self-conscious approach to colour and framing also prevents his work from descending into some of the near-unwatchable excesses of his peers. Scenes of bondage and torture, when they occur in Watanabe's films, are essentially presented as fantasy enactment, as performance and as cinematic spectacle, rather than as verisimilitude. What also raises his films above average is a far stronger attention to narrative, something already



above: Kiyoshi Komori's *Japanese Torture Punishment History* (1964), the Edo period torture movie that first set the ball rolling. ©Shintoho

clearly apparent in earlier films like *Women Hell Song: Shakuhachi Benten* (1970). His films actually have stories, and the sex scenes, while important to the narrative, are never allowed to take over entirely.

Virgin Rope Makeover (1979) plays like a bondage version of *Lady Snowblood* (1973). Mayuko Hino plays Shino, introduced in the midst of the 88-temple pilgrimage around Shikoku's Kôbô Daishi trail, clad in traditional white robes and with bell in hand. Her expedition has been prompted by the suicide of her father (Kôji Kokonoe). In the wake of his death, Shino's avaricious step-mother Aya (Naomi Oka) has claimed all the family inheritance and moved into the family house along with her lover (Masayoshi Nogami), a petty criminal who regularly indulges in rope play to add zest to their affair. After suffering several interruptions during her pilgrimage, in the form of a set of random assaults from a gang of ruffians, Shino returns to her ancestral seat masquerading in full geisha regalia to avenge her father's death.

This handsomely-mounted Meiji-period tale of rape and revenge saw Watanabe awarded the prize for Best Director at the first *ZOOM-UP* award ceremony in 1980, held by the magazine of the same name that



above: Kôji Seki, the director of Kokuei's earliest pink films, was still going strong throughout the '70s and '80s, with titles such as Shintohe's *Molester Invisible Man* (1977). ©Shintohe

emerged to fill the vacuum left following the demise of *Seijin Eiga*. Critics were quick to notice the film buff in-jokes within the film, notably in the witty motifing of Kon Ichikawa's *An Actor's Revenge* (1963) during the final crescendo of torture, as Naomi Oka, stripped to the waist, is throttled by red cords tied around her neck, tugged from outside the frame.

Virgin Rope Makeover was but one of a number of films Watanabe made around this period using the actresses Mayuko Hino and Naomi Oka, both evidently gluttons for punishment when it came to submitting themselves to the lash of the whip and the bite of the knot. Oka, already a veteran of the Toei Pinky Violence films of Norifumi Suzuki (she debuted in 1972 with *Girl Boss Guerrilla*) and several dozen Roman Porno titles, usually played the more worldly-wise mature woman, typically conspiring with sadistic tyrants to lure the virginal Hino into the web of torture. In the Taishô-set *Holy Virgin Bondage* (1979), which like *Virgin Rope Makeover* was based on a script by Takahashi, the two women play sisters living beneath the same roof in the scenic setting of a remote wooded valley, all but isolated from civilisation save for the occasional passing steam train. The house actually belongs to the lover, played by Hachirô Tsuruoka, of the elder of the pair, played by Oka. He's a callous, sadistic man whose ill

wife (Kayoko Sugi) languishes upstairs in her sickbed while he indulges in humiliating sex bouts with his mistress below. One assumes that it is only a particularly masochistic streak in Oka's character that keeps her there. When this same man ends up responsible for the murder of a left-wing anarchist with revolutionary designs who also happens to be the lover of Oka's younger sister played by Hino, the two siblings plot to kill the despotic master of the house. Unfortunately, Hino's nerve fails at the last minute, and after the knife is knocked from her hand, she is overpowered and locked up in the upstairs bedroom. After upending her, sinking his teeth into her ripe rump and drawing blood, the ogreish household tyrant keeps his new booty locked away, arms bound tightly to her sides, occasionally bringing her out as his plaything to humiliate his decrepit wife, and to indulge in his proclivity for binding her in lengthy coils of rope. Very soon he is abusing his mistress too.

Boasting a script from Kazuo 'Gaira' Komizu this time, *Secret Picture! Tightly Bound Torture* depicts the rising tide of militarism at the turnover between the Taishô and Shôwa period, in the tale of an itinerant *kinbaku* artist (Masayoshi Nogami) who travels from town to town and, in common with the protagonists of Watanabe's earlier Yamatoya-scripted *Secret Hot*

Spring Town (1970), stages elaborate rope shows using his wife (Hino). It is soon apparent though that the punishment, along with an ongoing consumptive disorder, has taken its toll on her frail form, as she begins coughing up gobbets of blood and is quickly taken from the stage, where she gasps her last. After her death, his wanderings take him to a small village in the mountains lorded over by a domineering and murderous *kempei* military police officer, Satô (Jun Yoshida), entrusted with enforcing law and order in the area, and his scheming mistress (Oka). When, in a local bar, the bondage artist is served by the spitting image of his dead wife – whose artist husband coincidentally is also suffering from tuberculosis – the group plot to overcome their oppressors using their respective crafts of painting and rope-tying.

Apartment Wife Bondage, also scripted by Gaira, brings the ritualised pain games to a contemporary setting, with Oka and Hino both playing neighbours in the type of anonymous tenement dwelling referred to in Japan, without any irony, as a 'mansion'. Oka plays long-suffering wife to a sullen, saké-swilling monster who browses through pornographic magazines at the dinner table and gets his kicks by putting a coil of rope, his golf clubs and a burnt fish to inventive use on her body: the heady aroma of fish smoking under the grill is enough to signal to the neighbours that his sadistic games have begun. It is no wonder that Oka looks next door to the man of the house (Ren Ôsugi) for affection, leaving her mousy counterpart Hino very much out in the cold with her disinterested spouse, with whom she shares little more than a living space. Unlike her fuller-figured rival, Hino can't even turn the head of the local TV repairman, who ends up an unwilling pawn in the two women's game as they brandish their sexuality at each other. "You housewives are all the same!" the young lad cries in abject terror as Hino attempts to force herself upon him while the other two adulterers are amusing themselves in a nearby love hotel. Hino finally finds acceptance at the rough hands of Oka's cuckold husband, but this is not to be a permanent partner swap. While being lacerated with rose thorns proves evidently more satisfying for Hino's abandoned housewife than being left to play with herself in the bedroom while listening to the moans emanating from next door, Watanabe's film is not to have such a conservative denouement as, packing up her bags, she announces she is heading off to live alone.

The viciously sensuous session at the coda is typical of Watanabe's approach as a whole. What might have amounted to little more than a drably rendered tale of smouldering passions in the suburbs is transformed into a near-kaleidoscope of primary colours, with interiors decked out in the gaudiest wallpaper and curtains this side of Jacques Demy's *Umbrellas of Cherbourg*, and barely a scene going by

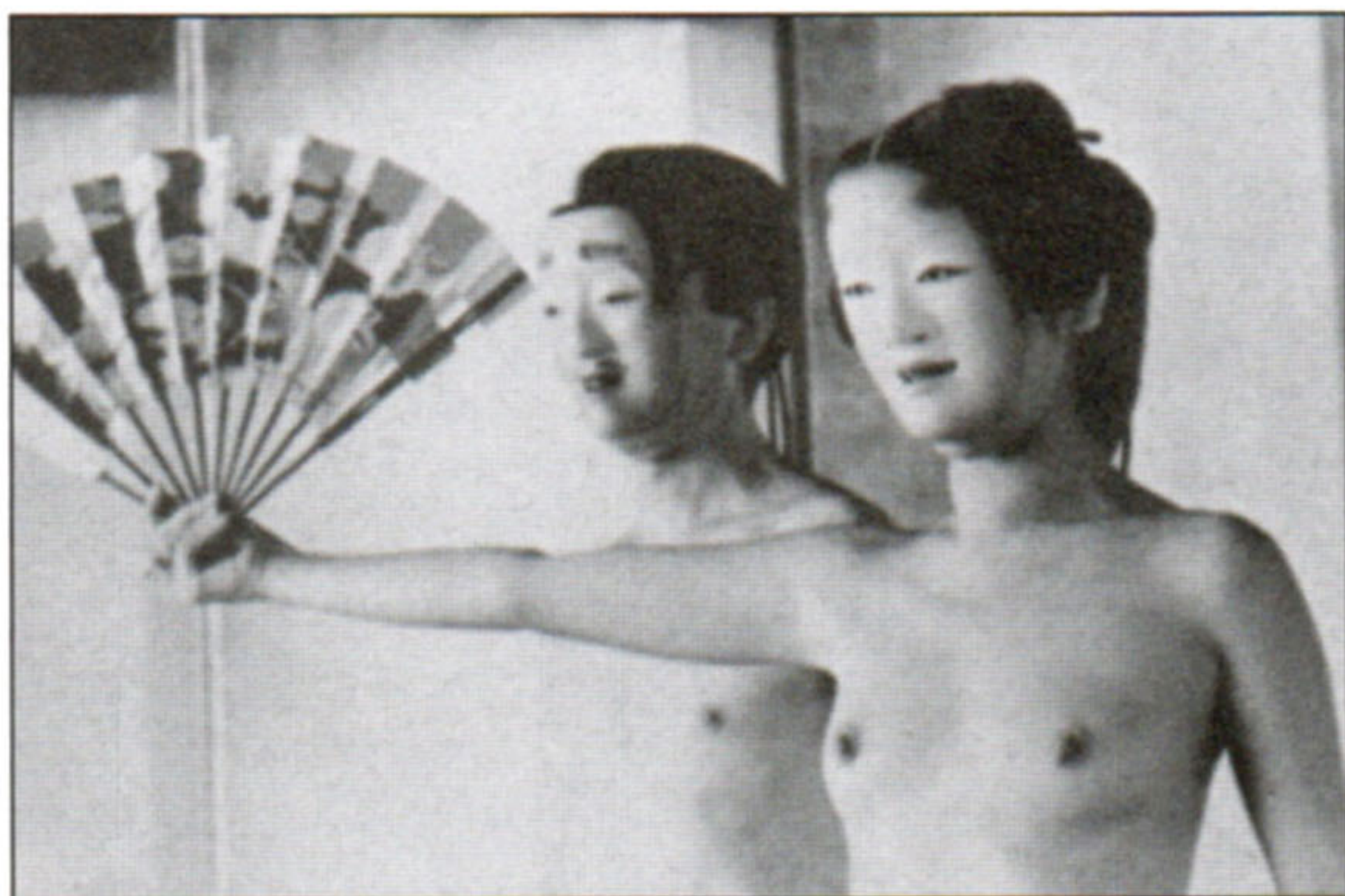
without an out of focus vase of flowers adding a smear of scarlet to the foreground. Oka's domestic abuse comes bathed in the numinous blues and crimsons of Dario Argento's supernatural horrors from the period, while the love hotel bedroom where her extra-marital liaisons unfold is a veritable garden of unearthly delights, festooned with fake foliage and a swing fashioned out of plastic vines.

Tightly Bound White Uniform Torture (1982) brought the Oka-Hino grudge match to a hospital setting, as they played two nurses fighting over the attentions of the same head doctor. When Hino's young rookie elicits the ire of the older ward sister by becoming pregnant, Oka ropes in a sadistic drug-addled psychopath in revenge; he drags the competitor off to a deserted warehouse and submits her to the usual abuse. This film features some of the most relentlessly cruel moments in its director's oeuvre, including a particularly unpleasant scene of Oka grinding her high heel into Hino's crotch just before she is subjected to an extremely nasty lashing from her partner in crime. By this time any political or social content – in fact any possible justification for the cruelty at all – had long departed from the scene. Why, for example, the hospital scenario, other than to add a different kind of backdrop to the abuse, safely distanced from the everyday experiences of the viewers?

Watanabe would carry on with this type of film throughout at least the next decade, producing films for a number of different companies including Film Workers, which he formed with Chûsei Sone, and distributing them via Shintocho, Million and Nikkatsu. He can be viewed as one of the pink genre's main frontrunners when it came to mounting ever more extravagant displays of bondage and torture, but would be joined by a whole host of others – most lacking the same eye for sensuous detail and less concerned with integrating the scenes within satisfying narratives than with seeing how much they could get past the censors.

And it wasn't just the smaller independent production houses that were pushing the sex film into darker, less wholesome territory. Where the independent companies led, Nikkatsu swiftly followed. But as the next decade approached, it seemed that both were less concerned with wooing new audiences than with retaining the old ones. The new films are probably best seen as reactions to a new pressure that had begun welling up beneath them, and one that would mean the *seijin eiga*'s core audience need never leave their apartments again.

This latest, and indeed greatest, threat to the Japanese sex film industry, as with that of all other countries, came with the arrival of a technology pioneered in Japan; the home video cassette recorder (VCR), and specifically the pornographic Adult Video (*adaruto bideo*), or AV.²⁶⁷ The original technology for



above: One of the dreamlike interludes in Tetsuji Takechi's *Daydream* (1981), motivated by a need to appease the censors. ©Takechi Pro

opposite: A new star is launched: Kyôko Aizome (seen with Kei Satô) in Takechi's 1981 remake of *Daydream*, Japan's first "hardcore" theatrical feature. ©Takechi Pro

recording images and sound onto magnetic tape, as opposed to celluloid film, was developed initially in America in the '50s, though in this first decade the expense and the lack of an industrial standard for the necessary recording and playing devices kept its usage largely confined to major broadcasting institutions. In Japan, it was only in the second half of the '60s that the first tape players, marketed by the Japanese companies Sony and the Japan Victor Company (JVC, or *Nihon Bikutâ Kabushikigaisha*), started appearing in places such as schools, universities and other educational or training institutions, as well as public areas such as ships, deep sea fisheries, and more crucially for the development of the sex film, in motels and hotels. In 1969, the Fuji Sankei Group started producing what in Japan is referred to as 'video soft' (*bideo sofuto*) – that is, material to be viewed on these machines – and so it is this year that maybe best marks the birth of the new format.

Televisions in the rooms of hotels were commonplace at the time, and it is no real surprise to discover that, following the switchover from black and white to colour, to fill the screen time the plusher establishments were soon offering mainstream films and programs that played from videotape via a centralised machine controlled by the management. As for Japan's celebrated love hotels, during the early '70s these were still a relatively new phenomenon, or at least, hadn't yet expanded into the mass enterprise they are today, hence the historical value of films like Shin Takakuwa's 1973 documentary exposé, *Sex Document: Motel Queens*, mentioned in a previous chapter. As such places proliferated across the country, catering to the needs of young couples still living with their parents and in need of a bit of privacy for a few hours, competition within the market led to the management offering more and more services within more and more luxurious surroundings: the kitsch décor of the places, with their themed rooms

and various accoutrements ranging from rococo soft furnishings, marble bathtubs and waterbeds to rope swings and torture racks, was legendary. It was inevitable that in-room TVs playing material from video aimed at putting their visitors in the mood would become part and parcel of the experience.

Before the emergence of the AV industry, the contents of these videos initially appears to have been pink films supplied from companies like Shintocho or Ôkura Eiga, or more likely the edited highlights from them, although this is a matter for further research. Toei was also a major supplier (in fact it had the largest share of this new market), and so was Nikkatsu, with their Roman Porno films. It is not widely remembered nowadays that at the same time the Nikkatsu Roman Porno trial was running, another trial began. The Nikkatsu Porno Video trial case began when, in January 1973, police seized tapes of four films from a motel in the town of Nagao, Kagawa Prefecture in Shikoku, containing four films, titled *Porno Consultant*, *Wild Party* (or maybe *Weird Party*), *Mad Ecstasy on Friday*, and *Blue Mansion*.²⁶⁸ It is unclear what films any of these titles actually referred to – they were possibly foreign movies distributed by Nikkatsu, or they might have been specifically made by the company for this new motel market. As with the Roman Porno case, the company was acquitted, allowing the evolution of video pornography to the next level.

Home use video decks emerged around 1977, following the development of the rival viewing formats of Sony's Betamax in 1975 and JVC's VHS in 1976, and an equivalent to Eirin was set up, named *Nihon Ethics of Video Association*, or *bide-rin*, that very same year. It coincided more or less with the beginning of Japan's Bubble economy, which brought about vast social changes in itself. The most significant were the continuing influx of young men drawn to work in the major corporations located in major cities such as Osaka and Tokyo, and the subsequent explosion of one-room *manshun* apartments made available for them to rent. Vendors of the new equipment quickly spotted this new market, and during the early '80s, some tape decks were sold packaged up with a free porno videocassette. Of course, the 'video soft' market in its early years wasn't devoted purely to pornography, but it is perhaps significant that, as mentioned in the previous chapter, one early title made available was *In the Realm of the Senses*, released by Toho Video in 1977, within a year of its theatrical opening and with Ôshima's trial still running.

Companies began specialising in straight-to-video pornography in the early '80s, and just as we've seen how Wakamatsu's films were popular in the early- to mid-'60s, with the swathes of blue-collar workers drawn to the city and living in communal dormitories,



the AV that appeared at this time adapted its form for this new generation of viewers, young men living alone away from their families and their usual social circles, working long hours and going home to an empty apartment. The early AV producers recognised this market, and were clearly aware that in terms of shooting, video was more portable, faster (it didn't require developing at a lab), and incurred far less costs in that it didn't need such large crews to work on it (though it is often forgotten that the price of the raw tape was actually surprisingly high at this period). Because the cassettes were viewed in private, no one cared about the story either.

Known as the "Father of Japanese Adult Video", the main figure identified with establishing the form much subsequent AV would adhere to – and still a major name in the industry to this day – was Tadashi Yoyogi. Born 18 March, 1938, Yoyogi entered the pink film company World Eiga in 1963 after an early stint managing an *ikebana* flower-arranging shop. The JMDB lists directing credits for him from 1973 onwards, firstly for the small Prima Project (*Purima Kikaku*) company, then from 1974 onwards for

Watanabe Pro (this company doesn't appear to be connected with any of Mamoru Watanabe's enterprises in any way, but was established by another producer, named Tadashi Watanabe). He made his AV debut in 1981, with *April of Lust* (*Inyoku no uzugi*), and in the same year, along with another figure named Hikaru Kitô, he founded Athena Image Company (*Atena Eizô-sha*), which is still going strong to this day, dedicated to the production of video pornography.

Many of Yoyogi's early AV titles featured a girl who would become one of this new industry's first superstars, Kyôko Aizome. Aizome bears the distinction of appearing in Japan's first ever hardcore theatrical feature,²⁶⁹ when in 1981 she starred in Tetsuji Takechi's return to the large screen, after a lull of almost a decade, with a remake of his own *Daydream*. The new version adhered closely to the template of the original, though with a considerably greater emphasis on the earlier scenes in which the demonic dentist, this time played by Kei Satô – a ubiquitous character actor perhaps most familiar from his appearances in the early films of Nagisa Ôshima – molests the recumbent body of his unconscious patient. The images of Aizome spread-eagled across a mattress with legs akimbo leave little to the imagination, with the dentist adopting the same rigorously clinical approach to her lower quarters as he'd done in the precursory scenes of oral hygiene. As in the first film, these are inter-mingled with the patient's own erotic fantasies, which build to a crescendo as the viewer is treated to the dubious pleasures of Satô's dangling scrotal sack. What tempted the veteran actor, then in his late fifties, to participate in such graphic hardcore *honban* sequences is anyone's guess, but it certainly guaranteed the film a lot of press in Japan. Though released in an unexpurgated version to a number of overseas markets, both theatrically and on video, local audiences had to make do with floating images of topless *shamisen* players (presumably intended to emphasize Takechi's original grounding in the traditional aesthetics of Kabuki theatre) superimposed over the areas of obscenity within the frame.

This inventive variation on the standard mosaics of the AV film was re-employed in *Daydream 2* (1987), which presented a new succession of pornographic phantasmagoria within the same dream logic format, with the added novelty that this time Aizome, taking the role of a woman dentist, was the doer and not the done to. The first 40 minutes or so, after Aizome shakes her hair loose and peels off her white coat to reveal a seductive leather costume bedecked with shimmering red and black sequins, are effectively a reprisal of the original films' hypnotic longueurs and, with the vampire returning as a spectral presence to oversee proceedings, are almost identical, save for the lesbian twist. The variations come in the latter half,



Midori Yûzaki in *Oiran* (1983) ©Takechi Pro

with the victim fleeing naked through suburban streets and crowded train carriages, before a potential rescue by the film's male lead is thwarted when the dentist and her two glamorous assistants, clutching machine guns and clad in *Rambo*-style bullet belts and riding in a jeep, catch up with them both on a deserted beach. She is whisked off to a deserted warehouse where she is tied up and whipped viciously by the dental nurses, before the male hero arrives in the nick of time to save her, and this ad hoc torture dungeon spontaneously combusts. The crescendo of drums accompanying the final images of Aizome glowering behind a sheet of flames as she is joined by the Dracula character, who embraces her before they both walk off-screen towards the camera, indicates that Takechi might well have drawn his inspiration from the fiery finales of Dario Argento's *Suspria* (1977) and *Inferno* (1980).

Sandwiched between the two '80s *Daydream* films were two other works helmed by Takechi that attempted to push portrayals of sexual activity on the large screen into more explicit realms. We've already encountered *The Saint of Mount Koya* (1983), which was not released in Japan. The same year's *Oiran* was a little more restrained in its leering close-ups of its leading ladies' private parts, although there were pubic shots aplenty in its un-obscured export versions. It was one of Takechi's most opulent works, with its Meiji Era setting recreated with considerable attention to period detail. Set at the tail end of the 19th Century, Takako Shinnôzuka (whose few screen appearances include the same year's *Crimson Night Dream*, directed by Shôgorô Nishimura, a Roman Porno rendition of the true-life story of the murderous 'poison wife' Oden Takahashi)²⁷⁰ plays Ayame, the high-class courtesan, or 'Oiran', of the title. Ayame is conducting an illicit affair with the lowly Kizuke (Satoshi Mashiba). Following their steamy lovemaking bouts, the couple's pillow talk turns towards dreams of escaping to America to start a new life. The one fly in their ointment is an obsessive tattooist, Seikichi (Takashi Itô), who having dispensed with the services of his latest canvas (Midori Yûzaki), develops obsessive designs on Ayame's flawless white skin as the basis for his next creation. To this end Kizuke is dispatched by the tattooist's murderous lackeys, but before Seikichi can get his hands on his delicious booty, Ayame is whisked away to a cathouse in Yokohama to service American sailors, and her leg is badly grazed in the fracas. Here she meets the sensitive George, who offers her a hand in marriage as an escape route to the United States. However, Ayame has been possessed by the spirit of her murdered lover, and his face materialises on her scarred knee every time her passions are aroused by another man – a case of 'you can take the girl out of Japan, but you can't take the Japan out of the girl.'

As with many of Takechi's films, *Oiran* is based on the writing of Junichirô Tanizaki. In this case, the script was a mishmash of two short stories; *Tattoo*, which, having been published in 1910 as part of a collection of short stories, was Tanizaki's first work to appear in print, and *The Tumour with a Human Face* (*Jinmensô*), which was published in 1918. Somehow, Takechi seems unable to isolate the interesting aspects of either tale. The latter in particular seems to offer considerable scope for filmmakers, though *Oiran* appears to be the only adaptation so far. Tanizaki's original story concerns a famous actress just returned to Japan following a successful career stint working in America, who learns of a film playing in a single theatre in Tokyo in which she is cast in the leading role. However, she has no recollection of ever having been on the shoot of a film with this particular plot. The film itself has no credits, and tells the tale of a young woman who is cursed by the appearance of a grotesque face that appears on her knee; the face of a man she has cheated. She originally thinks the film has been constructed through outtakes or spliced-in footage from her other films, and that the face appears to materialise on her knee through a clever use of cinematic superimposition techniques. When she finally sees the actual film however, she realises this would be impossible. After a projectionist who watches it solitarily in the darkness of a private screening room ends up driven insane by the amplified images cast from the projected print, the story ends with the possibility of thousands of copies being made and distributed across the world.

The horrific idea of the ethereal representation of a person provided by the projected moving image taking on a life of its own, completely divorced from its original source, not only presents an intriguing precursor to Hideo Nakata's *Ring* (1998); it also points to Tanizaki's own, extremely ambivalent, ideas about cinema, a potentially corrupting new medium of foreign origin, and a source of both fear and fascination in a rapidly westernising Japan.²⁷¹ Takechi appropriates only the most superficial aspects of the story, manifesting an overt xenophobia instead through grotesque portrayals of the American characters, paunchy figures with bald heads and hairy backs, grunting like pigs as they make love. By the time *Oiran* reaches its outrageous climax, as our possessed heroine, now relocated to America, spews forth gallons of white paint from between her legs over a bemused-looking priest performing an exorcism, what began as a well-crafted piece of high-gloss eroticism has degenerated into complete farce.

Tetsuji Takechi died on 26 July, 1988, and with him, so did the short-lived trend in hardcore theatrical features that marked his comeback. His big-budget pornos came from a different world to that of the pink and Roman Porno films. There was nothing else like

them at the time, and consequently they had little influence on domestically-produced sex films. At the other end of the scale, AV too followed its own unique path, with Tadashi Yoyogi's hugely popular *Document: The Onanie Series* (*Dokyumento ze onanî shirîzu*) launching the AV genre with a new form that quickly became identifiable as its own. The series, which began in 1982, was shot in a pseudo-documentary fashion, with the girls interviewed about themselves before performing sex or simulating masturbation onscreen. It is worth mentioning at this point that many of Yoyogi's earlier pink films bore the heading 'Document Porno' (*dokyumento poruno*) or 'Semi Document' (*semi dokyumento*), so clearly this faux-documentary aesthetic had always been a central component of the director's style. It certainly came to be one of the defining components of the AV industry's style, in which the fantasy being palmed off was done so in ostensibly realistic terms.

The *Onanie* series was just one of a number of sub-genres that emerged to cater for different tastes, and the field made prominent use on their video boxes of slogans such as *honban mono*, accentuating that the sex portrayed was real; *rori-kon*, short for Lolita Complex, with its references to Nabokov's fictional heroine promising alluringly youthful looking girls, most likely in school uniform; and *tantai joyû mono*, denoting a genre that placed individual performers at the centre of the film, and in this way created its own idol (*aidoru*) system of purely cosmetic fantasy figures devoid of any deeper psychology (*tantai* means 'pure', or 'elemental'). Genres based on rougher scenarios such as rape and bondage also later proliferated alongside the straight and not-so-straight sex, and a gay market was also developed.

The rapid explosion of AV in the early '80s ran concurrent with other developments in the adult market, such as the growth of pornographic manga, idol photo collections and more explicit magazines known as the *bini-hon*, or 'vinyl books', so called because they were sold, both in specialist shops and from vending machines, in plastic bags designed to stop kids from catching an illicit eyeful of their contents – surprisingly, while Japan had its tasteful nude calendars and glamour and girlie magazines during the late '60s and '70s, it was only in the '80s that magazines such as these, devoted solely to pictures of girls in standard pornographic poses, took off. All were subject to the same legal requirements as film in terms of what they could depict. Video just masked the more objectionable images with mosaics; magazines framed or blurred what one wasn't supposed to see; while manga just left large swathes of details un-inked. And it goes without saying that there existed a huge *ura* (illicit, literally meaning 'behind') market for pornography of all shapes and forms.

All these disparate mediums fall outside of the scope of this book, but it is worth acknowledging that each had its influence on the field of theatrical *seijin eiga*. Throughout the '80s, as their development, and particularly that of AV, coincided with the period of vast economic prosperity of the Bubble Years, both *pinku eiga* and Roman Porno alike would feel the pinch from the new small screen and print competitors, and would adjust its form accordingly, either by making use of new buzzwords such as *honban* or *onanie* within their titles to insinuate that the films were keeping up with the game; by using star *tantai* actresses drawn from this new medium; or by pushing their films further away from reality into the realms of decadence. The type of films made by Nikkatsu and the other pink film-producing companies as they reacted to these changes is the subject of the next chapter.

Footnotes

254 Interview with Kôichi Gotô by author, 2005.

255 Ibid.

256 Ibid.

257 Anderson and Richie. pg 27.

258 Interview with Kôichi Gotô.

259 See www.okura-bowl.jp/okuraland.

260 My thanks to Roland Domenig for this information about Million Film.

261 A couple of earlier full-colour titles mentioned in previous chapters, namely *New: Chronicle of an Affair* (1967) and *Blue Film Woman* (1969) were released in Japan by Hummingbird on VHS.

262 Nihon Bijutsu Senmon Gakkô. This information comes from Kinema Junpô's *Illustrated Who's Who of Japanese Cinema: Directors* pg 266, although it appears this institution no longer exists under this name.

263 The translation might sound a little awkward in English. *Midare* means confusion, disorder or turbulence. In a sexual sense it means stirred up, aroused, or refers to a general loss of self control; for example, in senses such as *midare-gami*, wild dishevelled hair. *Sugata* means 'form', 'shape' or 'figure'.

264 Interview with Vieillot, Martin. <http://eigagogo.free.fr/>

265 Ibid.

266 Though known as a photographer, Araki himself directed one Roman Porno title for Nikkatsu, *High School Girl Fake Diary* (1981).

267 The information about the beginnings of Adult Video comes from the first chapter of Inoue, Setsuko. *AV sangyô: ichô-en shijô no mekanisumu*. Tokyo: Shin-hyôron, 2002.

268 In Japanese: *Poruno onsarutanto, Uirudo pâti, Kinyôbi no kyôraku* and *Burû manshon*.

269 If we discount *In the Realm of the Senses*, which was a French co-production. It is also worth again emphasizing that while Roman Porno and *pinku eiga* undoubtedly did feature *honban* sex, they never made such an overt show of it, or rather such an overt show of not showing 'it', considering that all of these films were still subjected to optical obscuring by the censors for their Japanese releases.

270 The notorious 'poison wife', or *dokufu*, Oden Takahashi, was executed in 1879 after killing her husband. Her tale had previously been recounted in, amongst other works, Nobuo Nakagawa's film *A Wicked Woman*.

271 LaMarre, Thomas. *Shadows on the Screen: Tanizaki Junichiro and "Oriental" Aesthetics* (University of Michigan, 2005) presents a fascinating analysis of this short story, and more generally of Tanizaki's complex relationship to cinema, modernity and the West.

The Decade of Excess

Nikkatsu weren't slow to realise the popularity, within certain sectors of the audience, of such violent and sadomasochistic scenarios as those mentioned in the previous chapter. It was soon trumping companies like Shintocho with films that went that little bit further in terms of the amount of effort and expense put into creating the fantasy milieus in which the torments took place.

Take, for example, *Fairy in a Cage* (1977), set in the final days of the Pacific War, in which Naomi Tani stars as the wife of a rich industrialist who runs her own jewellery store in Ginza and, along with a Kabuki actor to whom she acts as a patron, is pulled in for questioning under the slightest of pretexts by the *kenpeitai* military police and given a severe probing. "This is normal procedure when interrogating a woman. A woman has many secret hiding places in her body," her ruthless inquisitor informs her when she refuses to remove her kimono. The film then pursues the standard Sadean line, depicting corrupt and decadent state officials and their vassals asserting their own rotten vision of morality and order on their subjects. Unfortunately, in the hands of Kôyû Ohara, a prolific but generally second-rate journeyman director, the film lacks the intelligence or insight of similar treatises on the same theme, such as Tatsumi Kumashiro's *Woods Are Wet* (1973), and merely wallows in its own depravity, with ever more vicious displays of abuse towards its leading lady.

The most interesting thing one might say about Ohara's film is that it manifests a bizarre masochistic trait in its treatment of the more shameful and historically sensitive years of Japan's not so distant past – which would surely have been fresh in the memories of some of viewers at the time – as a source of erotic stimulus. In an interview in the documentary *Pink Ribbon*, the director Yutaka Ikejima makes the provocative observation that the reason rape and torture fantasies were so popular around this period was that the older viewers came from a generation who reached their sexual prime during the war, as horny teenagers whose every sexual impulse had to be channelled into the nationalist war effort. "They walked around with a hard-on. They got horny over girls in work pants. They could be killed by the enemy at any time and could get persecuted for talking about love and sex, so they were all messed up. They fantasised about rape all the time." It's an interesting idea, though one notices, in contrast, that it was the Italians, not the Germans, who were making Nazi softcore sex films during this same period.²⁷² The modern viewer is more likely to share Donald Richie's sympathies; that a film such as this really just "provides an outlet for the often stultified animosity which all men everywhere must feel toward women from time to time. It expresses this in second-hand terms which, precisely because they do not arouse the intelligence, are potent indeed in arousing and exhausting the emotions."²⁷³



above: Kiyoshi Komori's *Japanese Torture Punishment History* (1964) provided the template and many of the more sadistic set pieces for much of what was to come over the following decades. ©Shintocho

Fairy in a Cage was one of many titles based on an original story by Oniroku Dan, Japan's most celebrated writer of the erotic novel, or *kannô shosetsu*.²⁷⁴ "Nikkatsu presents Naomi Tani in *Oniroku Dan's Rope and Skin*", or "Nikkatsu presents Naomi Tani in *Oniroku Dan's Rope Hell*", would have been a typical hook on film posters during the late '70s. Dan's stories mainly centred around scenarios of women being tortured, tied up and abused, in various exotic or not so exotic settings. In his book *Pink Samurai*, Nicholas Bornhoff describes the essence of Dan's writing as having, "arguably the same relationship to hard-core sadism as the Harlequin or Mills & Boon romances have to sex... His own particular leanings lie more in bondage, in which the scout's knots, fetishism and the aesthetics rather than the realities of sadism harmlessly substitute torture with ritual."²⁷⁵

With the help of Nikkatsu and the heavenly body of Naomi Tani, Dan successfully repackaged bondage for the masses, aestheticising *ad absurdum* the otherwise unacceptable, thereby bringing a niche practice to near mainstream acceptance. Tani's well-fleshed, matronly form took on a particularly pleasing aspect for red-blooded Roman Porno viewers when bulging through elaborate rope webbings, and provided a perfect canvas for the specialist *kinbaku*²⁷⁶ rope masters employed as supervisors on set. There seemed to be no limits to the onscreen humiliation Tani was prepared to suffer, and legend has it that to this day she still bears the scars from the eighty-odd films in which she was routinely strung-up and abused.

But there was more to her appeal than that. Perhaps it was the resigned stoicism with which she took her punishment. Perhaps it was her proud and majestic demeanour, which often saw her cast in the roles of stately wives of wealthy businessmen. But she was never one so haughty as to balk at appearing in such ignominious scenes as, for example, the one in Shôgorô Nishimura's *Rope Makeover* (1978). Here she plays a housewife whose marriage is spiced up after she is coaxed into the dark world of dungeons and candle wax following a chance meeting with an old friend with whom she shared a lesbian past. The initial re-acquaintance occurs in an art gallery where this acquaintance's husband is exhibiting a series of morbidly erotic pictures. With her own husband's nod of approval, Tani is drafted in to follow the artist's wife as his model and muse. As the running time progresses, the staged humiliations become incrementally harder, until the film's standout moment, which sees Tani smeared in butter and mounted by an overheated German Shepherd dog.

As she herself stated in interviews, Tani fit all the writer's criterion for his perfect SM heroine, and Dan often cited her as the inspiration for his novels: "1) she must look good in a Kimono; 2) she needs to have long jet black hair; 3) she needs to have a certain amount of

body fat, so the bondage rope makes a clear impression on her skin and 4) she has to be graceful under torture, with strong facial expressions. When this woman is abused, she must be able to glare at the sadist with pride."²⁷⁷

Born 20 October, 1948 in Fukuoka prefecture, Tani is said to have taken her stage name from the seductive Westernised fantasy figure at the centre of Junichirô Tanizaki's 1924 novel *A Fool's Love* (*Chijin no ai* – the story was filmed on a number of occasions, including a 1967 version by Yasuzô Masumura, and in 1980 as *Naomi*, a dreadful softcore adaptation directed by Yôichi Takabayashi for Toei Central Films).²⁷⁸ The surname alluded to Tanizaki too, but also punned on the character used for the word 'valley', in reference to her ample cleavage. (As such a renowned and imposing figure within the industry, Tani must have surely inspired Naomi Oka's choice of screen name: Oka means 'hill'.)

Years before she began appearing in Nikkatsu's films, in its peak period of the late '60s Tani was already one of the biggest starlets in the world of *eroduction* fandom. After a well-received photo spread for *Shûkan Taishû* magazine, she made her debut in a minor title directed by Kôji Seki, called *Special* (1967). Her earliest surviving screen appearances, in Seiichi Fukuda's *Madame O* and Mamoru Watanabe's *Slave Widow*, were made the very same year. While other actresses from the scene were lured in their droves to the major studio when Roman Porno began, Tani held off for some while, remaining loyal to the grassroots independent sex film industry that first put her onscreen (although she did appear in a minor non-speaking role in Teruo Ishii's *Orgies of Edo*, for Toei in 1969). Even after Roman Porno had hoisted her to a far higher profile, she continued to return to the lower-budgeted pink films. Mamoru Watanabe later constructed entire works around her famous name and solid frame, with titles like *Naomi Tani: Tied Up!* (1977) and *Naomi Tani: Rope Skin Hell* (1979).

Oniroku Dan proved instrumental in Tani's initial ascent. Born 16 April, 1931 as Yoshihiko Kuroiwa, he'd already established a reputation within the pink industry as a scriptwriter just a few years before her first appearance, although it is difficult to say exactly from when. He started getting his literary pieces published during the late '50s, using several *noms de plume*. The first of his stories to be adapted for the screen was one he'd written under the name of Matsujirô Kuroiwa – a novel called *Long Shot* that was given the big screen treatment by Seiichirô Uchigawa in 1960. As it was produced by Shochiku and filmed at their Kyoto studios, it would be safe to assume that it was not typical of the kind of material with which the author's name would later become associated. Nor was it successful enough for him, at this stage, to give up his day job as a teacher to embark on a fulltime writing career. It was only after

a period of submitting work to various publications under the names Kyôtarô Hanamaki and Oniroku Dan – the name that he decided to stick with – that he finally hit the jackpot. When his most famous work, *Flower and Snake*, first appeared in the pioneering bondage magazine *Kitan Club* in 1961, it immediately established his reputation as the foremost practitioner of his celebrated strain of darkly sensuous prose, and he was soon courted to lend his name and notoriety writing introductions to SM photo books and writing scripts for the pink industry.

(As an aside, the writer's sister, Miyoko Kuroiwa, though primarily known as a jazz singer, also appeared in a few low-end productions; for example *Spy and Chastity* (1960), directed by Tatsuo Yamada for Shintoho in the pre-*eroduction* era, and following that, a couple of *eroduction* titles similarly lost in the mists of time, such as Takae Shindô's *Dreadful Schoolgirls: The First Term of Puberty* (1964) for Nihon Cinema, and Kôji Seki's *House of Blind Lust* (1964) for Kokuei.)

It is difficult to say what project it was that provided Dan's first exposure to the pink industry. Pseudonyms and false credits abounded in these early days, and information about the *eroduction* in this era is, as we've established, pretty patchy. In an interview with Naomi Tani in the fanzine *Asian Cult Cinema*, the actress mentions that at the time she started out in the industry, Dan was "secretly writing pink scripts for Dokuritsu Productions under the name Matsugoro Kuroiwa while he was teaching at a high school."²⁷⁹ The first name, Matsugoro, might be either a typo or a mistake stemming from Tani herself, instead of the name he did use, Matsujirô, and we know also that there was no company called 'Dokuritsu Productions'; it was just a term meaning 'independent productions' that was used euphemistically to describe the *eroduction* market. However, if we check the JMDB for Matsujirô Kuroiwa, the penname under which he was first published, then it would appear that his first work is *Wet Woman*, directed by Jirô Matsubara in 1965. This film was produced by a short-lived company named Tôkyô Kikaku (or 'Tokyo Planning'), which was run by a certain Nobuo Yamabe. This company soon changed its name to Yamabe Pro, and in the following year released another title with a script attributed to Matsujirô Kuroiwa, *Humiliated Woman*, with two directors credited; Takeo Takagi (in other words, the former Toho producer Sojirô Motogi) and Shintarô Kishi. The JMDB lists five titles in total written under this first name, all directed by the aforementioned directors and one further Yamabe Pro employee whose name might be read as Ryô Hida.²⁸⁰ Yamabe Pro is also listed as having released five films written under the author's other early penname of Kyôtarô Hanamaki, beginning with *Devilish Married Woman* (1966) – co-directed by Motogi and Matsubara. His first actual screenwriting credit as Oniroku Dan listed on the JMDB is for a 1967 film called



above: Erstwhile pink performer and fulltime jazz singer, Oniroku Dan's sister Miyoko Kuroiwa, gracing the cover of one of her albums.

Rope and Breasts, directed by Shintarô Kishi and a new character called Ichirô Kyôdô.²⁸¹ It was the first of many he wrote under this name, which by now was already well established through his erotic literature.

None of these films appear to be with us today – nor in fact anything from the collective oeuvres of those attributed as having either directed or co-directed Dan's early scripts in the late '60s. With the exception of Motogi, these aforementioned Yamabe directors are all listed as having made around a dozen films each, and all between 1964 and 1968, none of which are extant. For all we know, all these filmmakers might even have been one and the same person. Similarly, Yamabe Pro was only active from 1966 to 1968, leaving little physical evidence of its passing, but most of the films that it appears to have produced around this time seem to have been scripted by Kuroiwa/Dan, or whichever of his various pseudonyms he wished to be credited under.

While Tani had already made a number of films for other companies and other directors (the usual suspects such as Kinya Ogawa, Shinya Yamamoto, Mamoru Watanabe and Akitaka Kimata), the first Dan-scripted film she ever appeared in, albeit quite far down the cast list, was *Code of Love* (1968)²⁸² directed by Hideki Miki at Yamabe Pro. It was the first of quite a few such collaborations. For instance, Matsubara directed Tani in another Dan story, entitled *The Whip and the Perverted Beast* (1968), with Shintarô Kishi credited as "planning" the production for Yamabe, while the following year Tani took the reigns as producer for her own company while Dan wrote the screenplay and Miki directed, in *When a Woman Gets Satisfied: Devilish Wife* (1969). Tani even directed herself in two films both written by Dan and released in 1972 – *Starved Sex Beast*



above: 'Wooden horse' scene from *Japanese Torture Punishment History* (1964).
©Shinto

and *Sex Killer* – although this director's credit was probably a publicity stunt, and most likely there was someone else wielding the megaphone on set uncredited. Now firmly out of the closet as Oniroku Dan and safely away from the school environment where he used to work, the writer also set up his own *pinku eiga* production company, Oni Pro, for a brief period between 1969-72, where he directed his own film, *Flesh Hell*, in 1971. No further details are available about this title, nor Dan's company.

The astute reader might have noticed that Oniroku Dan's first credited script for Yamabe Pro, *Rope and Breasts*, shares its name with the Masaru Konuma film made for Nikkatsu in 1983, already mentioned in an earlier chapter. There appears to be no real connection between the two in terms of story or author. Dan's own work featured a lot of rope and a lot of breasts, as did Konuma's for that matter, but the earlier film is in fact listed as the first screen adaptation of Dan's *Flower and Snake* story while, despite its bondage theme and the fact that Nikkatsu were right in the midst of their Dan Oniroku series when it was made, the second, directed by Konuma, appears to have no link with the writer at all.

Nevertheless, it would be Konuma who would be the man responsible for bringing Dan's *Flower and Snake* story out from the underground and for giving Tani her first top-billed role in a Roman Porno film. While she'd appeared in a supporting part in Akira Katô's *Sensuous Beasts* (1972), she'd resisted the company's offers of a contract thus far, reputedly because she "wasn't interested in playing second string to their established Roman Porno starlets,"²⁸³ though at the time she was considered one of the biggest names in *pinku eiga*. Nikkatsu, too, was facing a brief lull in public interest in its new erotic line, and soon realised Tani's peculiar strengths. And so it decided to try its hand for the very first time at the SM genre, and at her insistence, with an adaptation of *Flower and Snake*, a story in which she'd already starred in the Yamabe Pro version *From Flower and Snake: Rearing the Flesh* (1968), co-directed by Matsubara and Kishi.

Released on 22 June, 1974, the original *Flower and Snake* film is remembered less for any intrinsic artistic qualities than for proving the popularity of this stronger, darker strain of adult material with Nikkatsu's near-mainstream audiences, and for establishing the subsequent template. Tani, as she would on many occasions, plays the elegant wife of a wealthy company president who, seeking a divorce, is brought back into line by a young man hired by her husband. This young man is unable to perform sexually on any normal level, due to a traumatic experience when he murdered an American GI (black, of course) who was dallying with his mother. This makes him the ideal man for the job, but his re-education of his employer's discontented wife with whips and ropes has unexpected results, as it turns out that she is a glutton for such rough treatment.

As adapted by screenwriter Yôzô Tanaka, the results onscreen bore only the most tenuous relationship to the original novel by Dan, who was reputedly not particularly happy with the results. Nevertheless, it was a commercial hit, and the studio rushed into production with *Wife to Be Sacrificed*, released four months later, and also directed by Konuma. After his arguments with Tanaka over the script of the previous film, Dan had no involvement with this project. Though he later gave Nikkatsu exclusive rights to adapt his novels, the author was never particularly fond of Konuma's handling of his work or his approach to sadomasochism in general. In fact, though Konuma would make a lot of SM-themed films for Nikkatsu, he only made a couple of the subsequent twenty or so adaptations of the genre's leading literary practitioner. "I believe it was a company decision. But we won't know unless we ask Dan directly. Yet, I can't blame the studio for trying to avoid a possible confrontation," he later told Thomas Weisser.²⁸⁴

Born in the Hokkaidô town of Otaru in 1937, Konuma entered Nikkatsu in 1961, after graduating from Nihon University. He worked as an assistant before

Roman Porno afforded him the chance to make his debut with an early contribution to the line entitled *Call of the Pistil* (1971), and made 47 such titles at the company overall. Stylistically, perhaps his closest comparison in the pink film world is Mamoru Watanabe, with whom he shared a talent, or perhaps we should say a tendency, to aestheticise just about everything. He was especially noted for his decorous portrayal of rope abuse. He certainly possessed a very visual eye, but though often ranked alongside Tatsumi Kumashiro, Chûsei Sone and Noboru Tanaka as one of the company's A-list directors, he rarely strayed from this kind of staid bondage scenario. Surprisingly, more than a decade after Roman Porno was discontinued – during which time he worked in the erotic straight-to-video market and also made the *Janki V-Cinema* series (1992–99), about a mah-jong champion – his first feature to gain any sort of critical recognition overseas was *Nagisa* (2000). This was a coming-of-age film about a 13-year-old girl, set in the '60s. It won the Grand Prix for Best Feature at the 24th Children's Film Festival, held as part of the 51st Berlin International Film Festival in 2001. Konuma's last film to date is *When a Woman Changes Her Clothes at the Bus Stop* (2003).

During her reign as Nikkatsu's Queen of SM, Tani continued to appear in films made outside of the company, mainly for pink companies like Shintocho. For her Roman Porno roles, when she wasn't tied to Konuma in films like *Wet Vase* (1976) and *Tattooed Flower Vase* (1976), she did appear in other directors' work. One of the better films to make use of her talents was Tatsumi Kumashiro's *Black Rose Ascension* (1975), an ironic behind-the-scenes look at the adult movie-making business, in which she plays a politician's mistress who catches the attention of an obsessive director. He then decides she is the perfect replacement for his original starlet (Meika Seri), who has just fallen pregnant. It was one of Tani's rare roles in which she didn't spend the entire film tied up.

Generally, however, and especially in her later years at Nikkatsu, Tani found herself in the hands of the studio's lesser talents; directors like Katsuhiko Fujii, Akira Katô, Shôgorô Nishimura and Kôyû Ohara. In 1979, at the age of 31, she decided to quit the business while she was still at the top of her game, with her final film being Nishimura's *Rope and Skin* (1979). Aside from a theatrically-released compendium of clips of Roman Porno SM films, entitled *Oniroku Dan Supervision: SM Complete Works* (1984)²⁸⁵ and a much-later appearance in Hideo Nakata's documentary *Sadistic & Masochistic* (2001), she never appeared onscreen again. She subsequently put her fame to profitable use in a number of business enterprises including a bar, a nightclub and a video shop selling Nikkatsu's classics from this era.

Nikkatsu's adaptations of Oniroku Dan's novels didn't end with the departure of Tani. Several replacements were tried out, with the most durable, Mika

Takakura, lasting for five films. Undoubtedly, her waiflike figure was not as well-suited for the job as that of her celebrated predecessor, but by this time the series was scraping the bottom of the barrel anyway. Whether this was due to the declining quality of the works on which they were based, or shoddy filmmaking on the part of the Nikkatsu staff, it is difficult to say, but one of the later Roman Porno movies bearing the author's name, Ikuo Sekimoto's *Rope Torture* (1984), perhaps amply demonstrates how little mileage there was within this peculiar sub-genre. In the film Takakura plays Keiko, a lissom young beauty left cold by her marriage to her stuffy businessman husband Kobayashi (Kazuyuki Senba). A chance liaison with a young stud she meets on a beach appears to offer a temporary diversion, until she receives a whispered phone call and an envelope full of candid photos of them romping in the shallows. When she goes to hand over the demanded extortion money to her blackmailer, she finds herself blindfolded and lured to the sombre confines of the Club Diamond. Here she is embroiled, involuntarily one might add, in a world of dripping wax, double half-hitches and syringes up the bottom, all of which finds its way onto a video introduced to Kobayashi by his mistress Rumi (Kaori Takahashi).

Conservative, trite and predictable, and with little to distinguish the script from the ranks of similar works that came before it, *Rope Torture* lacks even the distinctively oppressive atmosphere of previous works like Ohara's *Fairy in Cage* or Nishimura's *Rope Makeover*. It is emblematic of the air of tired decadence that beset



above: The remorseless parade of torment continues in *Japanese Torture Punishment History* (1964). ©Shintocho

Nikkatsu at this stage: the film's set pieces reduced to a now-standard formula completely disconnected with any form of reality, and attempts at elevating the spectacle into the brandy-and-cigars echelons of sophistication instead drag it down to the realms of kitsch, with sequences such as the soft-focus slo-mo beach romps set to an *enka* elevator muzak accompaniment, and a risible striptease performed by a fishnet-wearing Takahashi for her wealthy sugar daddy.

Oniroku Dan clearly thought as much too. While Nikkatsu released a handful more titles based on his work throughout the '80s, as well as a further four under the heading of *Flower and Snake* – beginning with Nishimura's *Flower and Snake: Hell Edition* (1985) – the author took a brief retirement from fetish writing in 1989, buying up the magazine *Shôgi Journal*, dedicated to the game of Japanese chess, which he ran until it folded in 1994. He subsequently returned to the fiction genre, and to film too, among other things producing two self-penned straight-to-video works for the company Pink Pineapple in 1995. By this time, such strong SM-themed material had lost much of its popularity with its target audience. Nevertheless, one can safely say that Dan's centrality, across several decades, to this one-time highly prominent side of Japanese erotic film and literature is incontestable.

One of the more colourful of Nikkatsu's Oniroku Dan movies was Katsuhiko Fujii's *Catholic Nun Rope Hell* (1984), which followed young nun Mika Takakura's misadventures in a convent, haunted by erotic visions of being bound in rope and spread-eagled in a cradle of cord, like a crucifixion. When she wakes up with the welts still red upon her tender flesh, she realises these are no mere dreams. Later, she is carted away at knifepoint by a gang of young thugs who lock away a radio-controlled vibrator inside a metal chastity belt in order to make her squirm and leap like a cat on a hot tin roof whenever they push the button on the remote.

The negligible story notwithstanding, *Catholic Nun Rope Hell* is interesting for other reasons, namely that it is representative of one of the strangest sub-genres ever practised by the industry; the nun sex movie. The impetus came from outside the country. Released in 1971, Ken Russell's *The Devils* had unleashed a relentless wave of sin and apostasy across European cinema screens, leaving in its wake a rapidly proliferating trail of imitators that would later become collectively termed as 'nunsplotation'. So significant a feature of the lower end of the theatrical market was this briefly-existing cycle that reams of pages have been written on the subject, including the encyclopaedic tome *AntiCristo: The Bible of Nasty Nun Sinema and Culture*.²⁸⁶ Most surprising, perhaps, is how the winds of the international movie trade managed to fan the flames not only across the boundaries of Christian countries throughout Western Europe – in their time the industries of France, Italy, Germany and Britain all

had a pop at making at least one naughty nun movie – but across the entire breadth of the Asian continent, where, amazingly, it spread to the comparatively secular climate of Japan.

Films about Buddhist nuns (*ama*) are one thing, but the number of softcore fetish flicks featuring those of the Catholic variety (the *shûdôjo*) produced by Japan's major (and not-so-major) studios during the '70s and early '80s is quite phenomenal. The pink industry spawned a number of these, including Kan Mukai's *Catholic Nun: Secret* (1978) and Mamoru Watanabe's *Hell Rope Catholic Nun* (1981), but Nikkatsu were probably the most active in the field. Masaru Konuma's *Cloistered Nun: Runa's Confession* (1976) we've already mentioned in an earlier chapter, but to this film and Fujii's *Catholic Nun Rope Hell* we can also add Nobuaki Shirai's *Catholic Nun: Aching Within Black Robes* (1980) and two films from Kôyû Ohara: *Catholic Nun Lucia: Disgraced* (1978) and *Catholic Nun: Wet Rope Confession* (1979).

The mother superior of all these Nipponese nudie nun extravaganzas, the one which forged the path for all of these successors, came from Toei a few years earlier, in the form of Norifumi Suzuki's *School of the Holy Beast* (1974). The film begins with the beautiful Maya (Yumi Takigawa) embarking on one final night of sensuous pleasure in a colourful montage accompanying the opening credits, progressing from the material pleasures of a shopping spree around Shinjuku to riding pillion on the motorbike of a virile young hunk. After treating her to turquoise cocktails in a chichi lounge bar and providing her with her one last night of earthly paradise, he introduces himself as Kenta. Alas, the liaison is not set to last, as Maya reveals her pledge to enter that place "where women aren't women", revealed in the following atmospheric shots of the morning mist rising across a set of haystacks, as the citadel of anguish and repression in which the customary parade of perversions are to unfold: St. Clore's Convent.

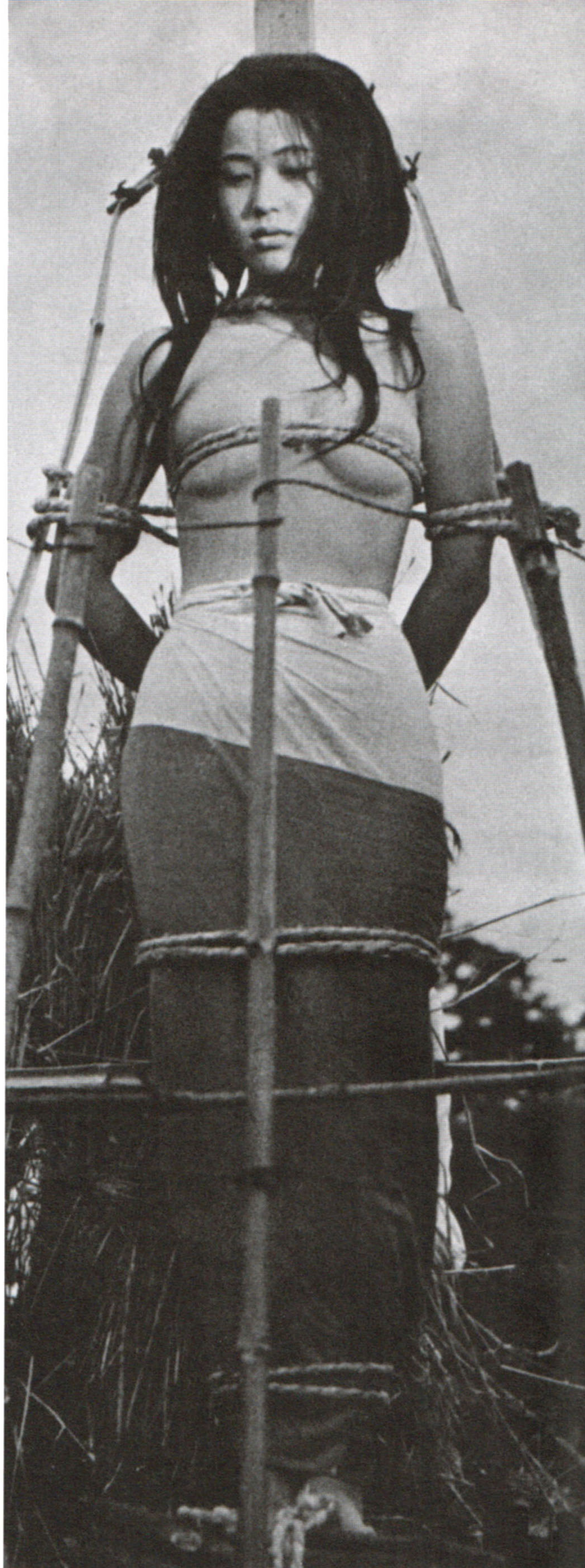
This cloistered world is a veritable furnace of subjugated carnal desires and broken vows. Maya is kept awake on her first night by her fellow sisters' topless self-flagellations as she attempts to rid herself of all ungodly thoughts. Later, two of the initiates seek Sapphic release in the hothouse, ornately framed by the vibrant heads of the surrounding flowers, while another pair, after being discovered greedily gorging themselves on fish sausages, are forced to engage in a topless whip fight as penance. Maya soon finds herself falling under suspicion from the other nuns as the beady eye of the Mother Superior notices an increasing number of these violations. Father Kakinuma (Fumio Watanabe) is called in to re-establish order in the Order, but with his wild staring eyes and Rasputin-like mane of hair, it is not long before he himself reveals his less than evangelical side. Fortunately, Maya manages to find a soulmate in the form of another of the convent's

more subversive elements, Sister Ishida, but her fun as a nun merely masks her true motives for being there, as behind the convent walls there lurks a deeper secret regarding Maya's own less-than-immaculate conception.

Blessed with the biggest budget of any of these works, courtesy of its Toei genesis, as well as being the first of the cycle, *School of the Holy Beast* is also by far the most sumptuously realised. While labelling Suzuki an artist might be stretching the point a little, certainly the scene in which Maya is disciplined after being bound in thorns and given a slow-motion thrashing with rose bush branches to form a whirlwind of petals and cascading hair, is staged with an undeniable sense of zeal, inventiveness and technical mastery.

"Dario Argento meets the Marquis de Sade", the DVD cover for the US release of the film boldly exclaims, and though Argento's particular acquaintance with the French aristocrat's philosophy of cruelty was probably formed some years before *School of the Holy Beast* was even a transient blip in its director's mind, one can sort of see where the quote is coming from. The women-only world of St. Clore's is a labyrinth of primary colours, conspiracies and secretive whispered voices in dark corridors, though interestingly Suzuki's film predates not only *Suspiria* (1977), but also the main glut of European nun movies, by a couple of years. Still, Argento seems an appropriate touchstone to describe many of the sub-genre's stylistic quirks. All those involved in setting the scenes of Fujii's aforementioned *Catholic Nun Rope Hell*, for example, appeared to be reeling from the influence of the Italian horrormeister's most popular film from this period. The ingredients are all here: its ersatz European settings; a colour palette of cool blues and lurid deep reds; a faceless assailant recognisable only due to his black leather gloves; and a soundtrack carrying distinct echoes of Goblin's music for *Suspiria*.

The convent might have been the perfect environment to cram in as many scenes of nudity, flagellation, lesbianism, torture and degradation as the running time would allow, but still the most puzzling aspect to *School of the Holy Beast* and all its local imitators is why were they made, and what need did they satisfy for Japanese audiences? One can say what one will about the merits of similar works in the genre made by Ken Russell, Jess Franco, Gianfranco Mingozzi and Walerian Borowczyk, but at least they introduced a modicum of social context to proceedings, or at the very least, they were produced in territories where religion was engrained within the constitution, and thus sexy swipes at Catholicism had a degree of political pertinence to them. Japan is a country in which Catholics make up a historically-persecuted minority numbering less than 2 million, and the structures that had turned Shintô into a state religion during the war years were dissolved during the



above: Trial by fire: *Japanese Torture Punishment History* (1964). ©ShintoHo



above: *Sale Prohibited Bound Wife* (1978) directed by Kan Mukai is one of a glut of Edo bondage productions produced by Shintoho throughout the '70s.
©Shintoho

occupation, so that religion has subsequently played no effective part in politics. In other words, the fantasies of torture and lesbianism staged in these fictional neverlands, where every anonymous dark robe masks a quivering torrent of repressed yearning and desire to be reined-in at the hands of a higher authority, really represents as conservative a fantasy as one will find in any *pinku eiga* or Roman Porno film. Scenes such as the naked communion and the deluge of urine unleashed over an effigy of Christ couldn't have been viewed as truly blasphemous by local viewers at the time, so perhaps the only real explanation for the settings is that they belonged to a tradition established by pioneering late-18th Century European pornographic literary works like *Justine* by the Marquis de Sade and Matthew Lewis's Gothic horror *The Monk*. One interesting twist to *School of the Holy Beast* is, however, introduced in the images of the atomic devastation that levelled Nagasaki and left Father Kakinuma scarred from birth: Nagasaki historically served as the main enclave of Catholicism in Japan during the Edo period in which it was banned by the Tokugawa shogunate.

It is worth mentioning in passing that, though Suzuki was contracted to Toei for much of his career, he did make one film for Nikkatsu, and it similarly flung together misplaced Catholic motifs with images of the A-bomb, this time with references to Nazism and its iconography, eugenics and social Darwinism, in one of the ugliest movies ever produced by a major studio. *Star of David: Beautiful Girl Hunter* (1979) was adapted by Atsushi Yamatoya from a manga by Masaaki Satô,²⁸⁷ and gleefully depicted a string of brutal rapes, tortures and murders committed by a young man raised in a privileged Catholic family. The nature-versus-nurture debate is introduced when it is revealed, at an early stage, that the son's atavistic proclivities stem from him being the bastard child of a violent rapist who broke into his parent's home and impregnated his mother. The natural born killer offspring justifies his atrocities – committed in the cellar of his opulent inherited ancestral home in which he keeps his naked victims strung up like animal carcasses before gruesomely butchering them – as assaults against a superficial, counterfeit culture of materialism that has taken root in Japan. Yamatoya's referencing of Catholicism brings to mind his role as one of the scripters of Seijun Suzuki's anti-fascist allegory, *Fighting Elegy* (1966); one imagines that it is easier to talk about the binary nature of good and evil in the symbolic terms provided by this essentially foreign religion than within the framework of the more amoral, karmic philosophy of Buddhism. But one wonders to what extent anyone involved in the project really understood the ideas the story wrestles with, and the film's lavishly orchestrated spectacle of unflinchingly violent misogynist set pieces makes it

difficult to appraise the garbled message about fascism in a Japanese context that the film is trying to put forward.

It was Ohara who provided one of the most entertaining additions to the Japanese nunsploitation genre, in the form of *Wet Rope Confession*, which features a young newlywed gang-raped on her wedding night and subsequently dismissed by a crassly unsympathetic husband for not doing enough to preserve her virtue. About to hurl herself seawards from a high cliff, she is talked out of committing suicide by a priest, who invites her to seek refuge at a nearby nunnery. However, life in the convent doesn't seem much easier than on the outside, and it's not long before the sexual humiliations begin all over again. To describe this film as a mere catalogue of exploitative set pieces wouldn't be wholly inaccurate. As with the Italian produce of its time, plot structure, subtext and characterisation all take a back seat to the relentless degradation on show. But the joy of *Wet Rope Confession* lies far beyond the whipping and the Sapphic encounters of its convent denizens; it is the sheer silliness of the attempts at bridging these scenes that are most likely to win viewers over. The quirky retro '70s interior decor of the room in which a nun has fun with a guy who has just picked her up is more likely to stick in your mind than the softcore fumbblings that take place within it. And who could forget the winning scene in which two sisters gyrate to a *wakka-wakka* soundtrack with a couple of wide-collared hoods in a local disco decked out with a spinning glitterball? The convent comes equipped with its own torture dungeon and a mute idiot who bites at the nuns' legs if they get a little too frisky, but it is the delirious antics of St. Animals Day that are most guaranteed to have viewers chortling in disbelief, as our heroine faces the ultimate humiliation of being forced into a fluffy sacrificial lamb costume and placed on the altar, while being manhandled by a man in a plastic mask as an orgy takes place around her.

Given how irrelevant Christianity is to the lives of most Japanese, it seems slightly odd that the nun movie's closest counterpart in the secular world, the Woman In Prison (WIP) film is so poorly represented in Japanese sexploitation cinema outside of the *Female Convict Scorpion* films, starring Meiko Kaji and released by Toei from 1972-74. The scenario offers many of the same attractions, though removes the emphasis from the gloomy, sinister atmosphere and esoteric rituals to the catfights and communal shower scenes that are imagined to be a daily happening behind bars in the women-only penitentiary. There were a number of period offerings set in this environment, notably the late-'60s Daiei films that began with Akira Inoue's *Secret Report from a Woman's Prison* (1967), but contemporary Women In Prison films proved something of a rarity. Ohara was responsible for the lion's share of Nikkatsu's

few tryouts in the genre, directing a trilogy of features known in the West as *True Story of a Woman Condemned* (1975-76; the title more literally translates as *True Story of a Woman's Detention Centre*), which are altogether far grittier, grubbier and grimier than Toei's more polished Kabuki-esque theatrics. Nobuaki Shirai's *Women's Prison* continued the trend, while much later, right at the end of Roman Porno's run, came Junichi Suzuki's *Women in Heat Behind Bars* (1987). None of these films deliver any real surprises when viewed alongside similar titles from the West.

With around 50 directing credits for Nikkatsu, it would be a mistake to dismiss Ohara as operating exclusively at the sleazier end of the spectrum. In many ways, he proved to be one of the most eager to change his colours, sporting a filmography that includes: the musical-comedy *Oh! Takarazuka* (1982); the one and only sci-fi Roman Porno, *Lady Momoko's Adventure* (1979), featuring Oniroku Dan in a cameo; a comedy spy caper, *Goldfinger: One More Time Inside* (1983); and a co-production with Hong Kong's Golden Harvest entitled *China Scandal* (1983), about human trafficking and the illegal underside of the Asian sex trade. After leaving Nikkatsu in 1984, he worked in TV, where he made children's dramas, and subsequently moved into the lucrative field of music video direction. His one non-Roman Porno feature was *Soul Music: Lovers Only* (1988), an adaptation of a novel by Amy Yamada, whose *Bedtime Eyes* had just been filmed by Tatsumi Kumashiro. It was actually produced by Toshiya Fujita, on whose politicised semi-documentary *Nippon Year Zero* (co-directed with Kazuo Kawabe, 1968) Ohara had received his earliest credit as one of the assistant directors. His feature filmmaking career had thus come something of a full circle. He died on 20 February, 2004.

Probably Ohara's finest work was *Pink Hip Girl* (1978), based on an award-winning novel by one-time "notorious political activist"²⁸⁸ Osamu Hashimoto. This first instalment spawned two sequels, *Pink Hip Girl: Love Attack* (1979) and *Pink Hip Girl: Marriage Proposal Epic War* (1980), both adapted by Ohara from Hashimoto's original stories (Ohara's later *Pink Hip Classmates: Lying in Wait*, from 1982, was not officially part of the series). These bubbly tales played things pretty close to the bone in their portrayal of the after-school sexploits of two high school students, the bubbly Rena (Kahori Takeda, the owner of the peach-like rear of the title) and her more reserved best friend Yûko (Ako), but if you can come to terms with the fact that the actresses playing the uniformed principals are above legal age, then the first film in particular – a coming-of-age tale that is actually rather entertaining and far lighter than the norm in the sex department – represents one possible direction that Nikkatsu might have been wise to pursue if it had wanted to broaden its appeal to a larger audience. Described by Ohara as,

"a film that describes sexual awakening of Japanese youth... told with a sense of enjoyment instead of suppressed guilt,"²⁸⁹ it benefits from a road movie structure and a lengthier running time (as well as a great theme song), making for a far more satisfactory viewing experience than most Roman Porno films from this era, although this apparently pushed the production way over-budget and Ohara was "scolded severely by the Nikkatsu management."²⁹⁰ In it, the two girls embark on a journey across Japan during their spring vacation, as Yûko takes off to the west coast city of Kanazawa, with Rena, double-guessing her friend's destination, following not far behind. When they end up staying at the house of Tokie (Yûko Katagiri), a young mother driven to prostitution when her *yakuza* husband Senichi (Yûya Uchida) winds up in jail, the two begin to come to terms with their own blossoming sexuality and the responsibilities it brings, before meeting up with a group of male classmates in Kyoto on their return journey, where Rena learns a vital lesson about love.

Considerably less subtle was Shogôrô Nishimura's appeal to *rori-kon* fantasy, with *Uniform Girls: The Fruit Is Ripe* (1981), an inconsequential tale following the sexual exploits of three high school girls. One does part-time modelling in her uniform after school hours for a man with a fixation with watersports; another puts out frequently with her wealthy dentist patron on his private yacht; while the third is desperate to make off with the virginity of classmate Takeshi from under the nose of his *kyôiku mama* ('education mama'), who in one disturbing scene is seen forcefully relieving her son's pre-exam stress orally by the light of his bedside lamp. The fact that the actresses are at least ten years too old for their uniforms makes this less disturbing than it might have been. Nonetheless, the frothy style sits at odds with the perversity of many of the sequences, and the film has little to offer outside of these pink frills.

Though the company had higher resources at its disposal, in general the contents of Nikkatsu's films tended to echo that of the pink film. As noted, the ritualised onscreen SM games prompted by Oniroku Dan's prose became an integral part of the *eroduction* long before Nikkatsu brought it out from the shadows. Towards the end of the decade, as Roman Porno's early lustre began to dull, the company decided to follow the prevailing trend of hardening things up, releasing a series of films which it labelled 'Violence Porno' (*baioresu poruno*). This prevailing trend, by the way, was not just noticeable within the country's own low-budget indie cinema. One doesn't have to look too far at what was going on in other parts of the world, either in the so-called 'roughie' genre of sex films in the United States, or within the seedy porno-horror twilight zone of Euro sexploitation, to see why feminists were up in arms at the spiralling excesses of

pornography throughout the '70s and '80s. If there was such a thing as an anti-porn lobby within Japan, it took a little longer to stem the tide.

Nikkatsu set the ball rolling with a number of titles by Yasuharu Hasebe, one of the more talented directors to emerge from the company's 'New Action' line in the late '60s. Hasebe had left Nikkatsu originally when it switched to sex films, and spent a few years working in television, but returned to make the occasional film like *Delinquent Girl Cop: Dirty Mary* (1974) – Nikkatsu's Roman Porno answer to *Dirty Harry* – before being tempted back on a more fulltime basis to helm its new *baioresu poruno* range, with titles such as *Rape!* (1976), *Assault! Jack the Ripper* (1976), *Rape: The 13th Hour* (1977), *Secret Honeymoon Assault Train* (1977), *Attack!!* (1978), and *Outrage!* (1978).²⁹¹

These titles suggest much the same sort of thing as Seiji Izumi's pink film *Sex Document: Serial Rapists* (1975), mentioned in the previous chapter – strings of outrages held together by wafer-thin plots. The films themselves were something of a mixed bag, with the greater resources at Nikkatsu's disposal granting Hasebe the leeway to experiment within the formats of the thriller, the road movie, the urban paranoia movie, or just plain gung-ho, no-holds-barred exploitation film. The most entertaining of these, in a slapdash sort of way, is *Assault! Jack the Ripper* (1976), which begins with the terrifying-looking Yuri (Tamaki Katsura) – a newly employed *kissaten* (coffee shop) waitress with a bad attitude and an even worse hairdo – being berated by the mama-san of the establishment for upending a cup of coffee over a sleazy elderly patron who just tried picking her up. A bad girl to the point of delinquency, she manages to cajole Ken, the mild-mannered café pastry chef, into giving her a lift back home through the rain when the shop closes that night, with the covert promise that he might not be waking up in his own bed the following morning. The best-laid plans reach a temporary hiatus when they wind up giving a lift to a strange girl (Yuri Yamashina) whom they almost run over. The new passenger immediately strips off her blouse and starts rubbing the leftover cream cake Yuri had pilfered from the kitchen into her chest, before beginning to play recklessly with the icing knife Ken has inexplicably taken from the kitchen with him. Ken manages to wrestle the knife from her grasp, but when she then produces a handful of razorblades and looks set to use them on her own wrists, the two kick her out of the car, whereupon she collapses dead upon the road. Rather than do the sensible thing and report her death, the two decide to hide her corpse in a nearby junkyard, thus putting themselves on the wrong side of the law. After returning back to Yuri's home, they strip off their wet clothes and slip between the sheets to alleviate their shock and anxiety. But come the dawn and Ken doesn't seem overly enthusiastic about the prospect of a second night in Yuri's bed, and even

though this is where he finally winds up, it is with a considerably dampened ardour... which is when Yuri suggests that a possible way of heating his passions to the levels of the previous night might be to go out and kill again. A couple of corpses later and the two are cohabiting and enjoying a healthy love life fuelled by rape and murder. Things only begin to go awry when Ken decides to go it alone. Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned...

It is doubtful whether many modern viewers would find much to be offended by in *Assault! Jack the Ripper*. Lumping the film in with the other rape-themed nasties isn't really accurate, as it is closer to the more explicit end of the US slasher genre, or what was coming out of Italy at the time – a gripping thriller, one of fairly dubious moral content, it is true, but fairly dramatically constructed and entertaining, and certainly not bad on a technical level. Hasebe opts to play things straight-faced, although the story is clearly quite ridiculous, bailing out of a potentially interesting scenario early on to follow a particularly childlike strain of narrative logic as it charts the histrionic romance between its two oddball characters. But it is hard to consider the issue of copycat crimes for a film featuring, as its main character, a love-sick baker who brutally jabs his cake knife at the crotches of a string of shop girls, nurses, tennis players, whores, housewives and even a Buddhist priestess.

Just like his gaudy pop-art inspired debut, *Black Tight Killers* (1966), most of Hasebe's rape titles lack not only psychological realism, but also any degree of connection with the real world, and like so many films of this type, present images so far removed from their viewers' experiences that one can imagine that once they'd emerged blinking into the daylight from the gloom of the *eiga-kan*, these onscreen overindulgences would melt away like dreams before they became immersed once more in the daily grind. In this respect, *Outrage!* (1978) is something of a surprise. A rape-and-revenge road movie relayed in a gritty crime movie style, the film follows a single woman named Mayuko (Natsuko Yashiro) after she is raped at the roadside by a truck driver who tricks her out of her car to help him change a tyre. In the following scene, the hardened police officer to whom she reports the crime immediately adopts a lewd line of questioning before wafting her claim aside, telling her that it is impossible to bring any charges without evidence. Our shell-shocked and expressionless heroine's plight throughout the film, as she is pestered and roughed up by almost every man she encounters, is relayed in parallel with that of an itinerant prostitute she meets at the police station, who similarly faces regular abuse at the hand of her truck-driving clients. If one takes the view that Roman Pornos were not necessarily just straight sex films, but films which took sexual subject matter as their theme, then the film's depiction of powerless and rootless single young women whose fate is in the hands of men, if not

going so far as to offer a critique of certain patriarchal values engrained within Japanese society, does at least draw attention to a certain unsatisfactory reality for the modern Japanese woman.

Which is more than one can say for the preposterous red-blooded macho fantasy of *Rape: The 13th Hour* (1977), undoubtedly the least of Hasebe's works under discussion. Aside from a few minor car chases and fistfights, what you see is pretty much what you get; a succession of Nikkatsu starlets, including Yuri Yamashina, Natsuko Yashiro, Naomi Oka and Rei Okamoto, ravished by an anonymous serial rapist (Yûdai Ishiyama) dressed in a conspicuous red leather jacket, and his young protégé, a gas station attendant whom he meets when he is sheltered from three roughneck vigilantes in the opening scenes. After taking off in a white pickup truck, the two then break into the apartment of Yamashina's pretty young ballerina and assault her, before the rapist disappears off into the night. But the experience has a profound effect on the young man, and hey presto, a new sex offender is created overnight, as he takes to prowling around the local lover's lane with a monkey wrench in hand, looking for new victims, with his more experienced mentor later returning to spur him on.

Made for those who purport to be turned on by women's bodies but feel far more at home in the company of men, the film adopts the format of the buddy movie, with the denuded bodies of the rapists' victims acting as proxies for any latent same-sex fantasies the audience might hold. To say it downplays the psychological effects of acts of sexual violence on the victim – a possible defence for some of the films in the series – would be a gross understatement. Cries of pain turn to yelps of pleasure as one violated girl clambers on top of her assailant and, in a ludicrous development, before he leaves gives him a wad of banknotes and an invitation to come back. The rape of the ballerina is staged to the strains of *Swan Lake*, with feathers from a shredded pillow swirling around her naked body like flurries of snow. The final scene almost seems like an apology for the onscreen outrages committed in the name of entertainment, as the two men are brought to justice by a gang of gay mobsters who sodomise one of them before bashing out his teeth with a lump hammer and forcing him to use his bloody mouth to fellate them.

With such excesses, Nikkatsu soon found itself on the wrong side of the critics, and toned down its output for a short while. At the same time, Roman Porno was facing another spell in the doldrums and in need of a boost to keep audiences coming. Its next series to take on rape as an organising principle was to adopt a more sophisticated and mature approach which, while portraying the act with just as much verve, looked more at its psychological effect on both its perpetrators and, more importantly, its victims.

Nikkatsu's five *Angel Guts* films (1978-88) were based on an established manga series written and drawn by Takashi Ishii, and were directed by the company's top talents. Ishii states that his original stories were particularly popular with college-age young men, and caused something of a revolution in the manga world during the '70s with their more complex, realistic style, and a depiction of women that went beyond the idolised cutesy fantasy representation dominant at the time.²⁹² We should be a little careful with the word 'realism' when talking about these depictions. In the way Ishii means it, the 'psychological realism' essentially equated to a level of depth and ambition that reached beyond the simplicity of the established norm in the field, both in terms of their more complex narratives and their ciné-realistic graphic style. While this was hardly kitchen sink-style social realism, Ishii's characters were rooted very much in the real world, rather than existing solely in the ethereal domain of the printed page and the imagination. They had jobs, families and other responsibilities. This is very much the underlying theme of the series; this gulf between the idealised fantasy of women and the flesh-and-blood reality. His manga attempted to get beneath the mysterious skin of these paragons of femininity to expose the beating heart beneath, hence the title: though 'guts' might equate to an unpleasant and bloody materiality in the Western imagination, in Japan they play a similar role to the heart, as the seat of emotion, the pit of the stomach sensitive to surges in the adrenal flow. The visceral title, as well as parallels in the individual films' contents with American titles like *I Spit on Your Grave* (1978), has accounted for the inclusion of the *Angel Guts* films in many Western narratives of the Japanese horror genre during its boom years after the turn of the new millennium, despite the series evolving out of the adult film tradition. Also, as we shall see, the films in the series differed quite radically from one another in terms of style and content.

With his manga having such an intrinsically cinematic quality about them, it comes as no real surprise to learn that Takashi Ishii was something of a movie buff in his youth. Born 11 July, 1946 in the city of Sendai, he was an avid frequenter of local movie houses, and according to the director himself, even went as far as taking an 8mm camera into the theatre with him to film the screen and replay his favourite scenes back at home.²⁹³ It is unsurprising, perhaps, that Ishii's own films, directed much later, have a tangible Hitchcockian air of artifice about them, as if acknowledging the voyeuristic nature of the medium. It would be a while before he started to direct his own productions however, and the route he took was more circuitous than most. Asthma thwarted his initial early dream of becoming a moviemaker. After joining Nikkatsu in the '60s, he found himself unable to cope with the notori-



above: Eri Kanuma plays the title role of *Nami* in Noboru Tanaka's 1979 entry in the *Angel Guts* series adapted from Takashi Ishii's manga. ©Nikkatsu Corporation

ously tough life and long hours of an assistant director due to his ill health, and was forced to leave the company. Initially at a loss as to what he should do, he stumbled onto his alternative career path as a manga artist with the *Angel Guts* series, with which he soon gained an avid readership among the college crowd. Interestingly, despite the erotic nature of the series, Ishii himself claims he had no interest in what the filmmakers at Nikkatsu were doing following the launch of Roman Porno after his departure, so he must have been surprised when his former employers knocked on his door to invite him back.

It might be a little misleading to label *Angel Guts* a series as such, as there is no real continuity between the individual films. Though they contain similar themes, and visual motifs taken from the manga, each one basically works as a self-contained movie in its own right. Aside from Ishii's presence as scriptwriter, the main linking device is that each revolves around a female character called Nami Tsuchiya (a different actress playing a different role from film to film), and focuses on her relationship with her male counterpart, Tetsurô Muraki. The basic characteristics of the characters remain similar in each of the films. (Incidentally, the two same characters also feature in a number of Ishii's other scripts outside of this series, for

example in the Roman Porno films *Rouge* (1984) by Hiroyuki Nasu, and *Red Rope: Until Exhaustion* (1987) by Junichi Suzuki, as well as in Ishii's later, non-Nikkatsu, works.)

The first film, *High School Coed* (1978) directed by Chûsei Sone, is something of the odd one out in a number of respects. Firstly, it was not scripted by Ishii – only adapted from one of his stories by the film's assistant director Toshiharu Ikeda and another character named Ryûsaku Shinsui from outside of the film world (Shinsui was actually from a theatre company called Mr. Slim that was popular at the time, and has no other screenwriting credits, in Roman Porno or otherwise, although he did appear in minor roles in a handful of other Nikkatsu films of the same period.)²⁹⁴ There is also no Muraki character and, unlike subsequent entries, Nami remains peripheral to the drama. In this case the story belongs to a roughneck trio of bikers led by the volatile Kajima, and consisting of the craven Sadakuni and the only slightly more stable Tetsurô, the real focus of the piece (his surname in the film is Kawashima, not Muraki). When he is not raping and pillaging with his gang, Tetsurô leads a thankless existence, toiling away in a factory earning enough to look after his younger sister, Megu (played by an actress credited with the same name as her character, Megu



above: One of the rape victims in Noboru Tanaka's well-crafted but contentious *Angel Guts: Nami* (1979). ©Nikkatsu Corporation

Kawashima), to whom he is fiercely protective. All traces of their parents are absent from the picture. Tensions erupt within the group when Tetsurô butts in on Kajima as he is molesting a schoolgirl called Nami (Machiko Ôtani), who is around the same age as Megu, and asks him to show some remorse. Straight away, Kajima spots what he sees as a weakness in Tetsurô's psychological armour and decides to exploit it.

Sone was a director eager to try out new things from film to film, and though he'd lost something of his status as Nikkatsu's top director since his early successes, *High School Coed* was seen by many as a return to form. Unlike the other films, it plays more like a biker movie than a psychological thriller, and while featuring the odd poetic moment (the high contrast flashbacks filmed to simulate the frames of a manga comic), its raw and gritty style is actually rather wearing, as its characters growl, claw and bark at one another while jostling for top dog status. The sexualised depiction of high-school-age girls as the fuel for all the macho testosterone-charged histrionics is also bound to touch more than a few raw nerves.

Sone was soon back helming the second *Angel Guts* movie, *Red Classroom* (1979), which in many respects can be seen as the first in the series proper, as

it is the one in which the main characters of Nami and Muraki – here played by Yûki Mizuhara and Keizô Kanie respectively – are introduced. In this episode, Nami is still kept just out of arm's reach, and it is through Muraki's eyes that the story is told. He is the editor of a men's only magazine who becomes bewitched by a mysterious woman he sees in a staged rape scene in an illicitly screened blue movie (the title refers to the location where the rape was filmed). The woman, of course, turns out to be called Nami and, intrigued by her cold impassive stare as she gazes out of the screen at him, Muraki tracks her down in order to get to know her more fully and find out what desperate circumstances led her to become involved in the movie. Was her appearance voluntary, or had he just witnessed an actual filmed rape? As he draws closer to this apparent damsel in distress, he finds only pain and misery awaiting him.

One of Ishii's stated intentions with his manga was to explore the ways in which men and women relate to one another, and especially men's expectations of women. Part of the irony contained within the title of the series is that angels are fantasy figures and as such do not have internal organs like guts to link them to a physical existence. Those that fall in love with an image

are not seeing the real person. *Red Classroom* perhaps captures this element better than any of the other films, as Muraki falls prey to all manner of dangers while trying to reconcile the image of Nami seen in the movie with the reality. Nami remains an elusive femme fatale character throughout the film, with any attempts at getting close, or understanding her, proving futile, indeed dangerous. Interestingly, the actress Mizuhara played a not entirely dissimilar role as the eponymous heroine of Yôichi Takabayashi's softcore adaptation of Tanizaki's *Naomi* (1980).

Sone's presence in the director's chair is especially noteworthy considering that this and its predecessor are the two most stylistically different consecutive episodes in the series. Rather than the rather crude, punkish energy of the first, *Red Classroom* opts for a more even-paced, almost dreamlike approach, putting us firmly in the shoes of its obsessive protagonist. The dramatic use of pounding rain, deep saturated reds and coloured lighting also became stylistic adornments that were increasingly engrained within the look of the series. The result is not only one of the best of Sone's late career – shortly before he left the company to go independent – but also of Nikkatsu's entire Roman Porno period. The only real distraction from the main thrust of the drama is a far too lengthy sex scene, midway through, that disrupts the pacing and looks like its real purpose is to pad out the running time.

As the series progressed, it became clear that one of its most intriguing aspects was in seeing how the various directors handled and interpreted the individual instalments. For *Nami* (1979), the flamboyant Noboru Tanaka took over the reins, and with the running time expanded beyond Nikkatsu's usual length, it resulted in arguably the most substantial of the five films, although in some respects also one of the most problematic. In this one, Nami, played by Eri Kanuma, takes centre stage for the first time as an ambitious young journalist working for the glossy weekly *The Woman*, for whom she is writing a series of articles following up on the lives of rape victims. When she goes to visit one such woman, Ran (Miyako Yamaguchi), now a stripper who performs as part of a violent SM show, she comes face to face with Muraki (Takeo Chii), a mysterious man with an inexplicable interest in the same cases that she is studying. Meanwhile, as her research continues, she begins to get more deeply involved with her subjects.

Despite being one of the most well-crafted, richly characterised, and satisfyingly plotted of the series, Tanaka does go rather overboard on the leering close-ups and the Grand Guignol-esque peels of thunder and lightning during the scenes where the series' title is given its most literal treatment, taking the movie into realms seldom trodden by even the most graphic of Japanese *ero-guro* horrors. In fact, even those prepared

to defend the exuberance with which the six rape scenes that punctuate the running time are staged might find the events of the final quarter a little hard to stomach. But if you don't allow your enjoyment to be hampered by these stronger scenes, the interplay between Nami and Muraki works finer than ever, and the film provides more than most to think about.

By the fourth film, *Red Porno* (1981),²⁹⁵ made after a period of two years had elapsed since the previous entry, Nikkatsu's priorities had begun to appear focused elsewhere. The running time is shorter and the plot shallower than the other titles, although this is also attributable to the fact that the original director dropped out of the project, and the responsibility was instead thrust upon the shoulders of Toshiharu Ikeda at the last minute. Born 23 February, 1951, as Ikeda would have it his entire filmmaking career was something of an accident set in motion by a drunken barroom bet that led him to his employment at Ishihara Production, the independent production company set up after Yûjirô Ishihara – Nikkatsu's biggest star of the '60s – had left the studio. "I didn't even want to be a film director,"²⁹⁶ he stated later in his career, maintaining that his happiest times at Ishihara's company, then later at Nikkatsu, were as a low-ranking assistant director, cleaning floors and emptying ashtrays. As well as working on the earlier *Angel Guts* films as assistant director to Sone and Tanaka, Ikeda had also previously directed three other Roman Porno movies: *Sukeban Mafia* and *Sex Hunter* in 1980; and *One Summer's Experience: Blue Coral Reef* in 1981. When one takes into account that *Red Porno* was written, shot and edited in under a month in order to get it into cinemas in time for a Christmas release, it is amazing that the results are as good as they are.

In this one, Nami, played by Jun Izumi, is a department store worker who, in a not entirely plausible plot twist, inadvertently finds herself modelling in a nude SM photo shoot for an adult magazine. The centrespread soon catches the attention of a horny young stalker – naturally enough named Muraki (Mashiko Abe) – resulting in a set up that might be considered the mirror inverse of *Red Classroom*, as we experience his attempts to get close to her through Nami's eyes. According to Ikeda, his vision for the film was that when the two characters appeared in the same frame together, there was a wall, a door or some other obstacle between them. Whereas the finished product undoubtedly suffers due to the rushed production schedule, this one actually works better than any of the others as a straightforward Roman Porno. Individual scenes are well staged, and the movie zips along with a minimum of fuss. Even if the plot does seem a little like an afterthought, surely no one will feel cheated by such scenes as the bewildering *pièce de résistance* as Nami brings herself to a climax using a clothesline and a *kotatsu* table heater.

The story behind the scenes was a little less rosy however, as Ikeda and his leading lady came to blows over an unauthorised shot of her character's rear end that is shown in one of the magazines that her character appears in within the film. The shot in question was apparently not of Jun Izumi after all, and so at the starlet's insistence the company cut it against Ikeda's will. Unimpressed with the level of support offered by Nikkatsu to its creative agents, Ikeda left and made what many consider to be his finest film, *Mermaid Legend* (1984), at the Director's Company, whom we'll look at in more detail shortly. He maintained his close friendship with Ishii, however, and the two collaborated once more when Ishii wrote the script for Ikeda's gory splatter movie, *Evil Dead Trap* (1988), coincidentally released a mere week after Ishii's directing debut with the final *Angel Guts* movie produced by Nikkatsu, *Red Vertigo* (1988), which was made after a six year break from the series.

In the interim however, Nikkatsu hardly shied away from rape fantasies, often made with considerable less finesse than any of the *Angel Guts* entries. It was up to Kôyû Ohara to come up with one of most depraved of

such offerings, which went by the delightful title of *White Rose Campus: And Then Everyone Gets Raped* (1982). In the film, a busload of 35 high school girls on a study trip with their comely teacher (Nami Misaki), while stopping off for a toilet break, find their vehicle boarded by three armed thugs who run rampage down the aisle, systematically denuding, deflowering and then discarding their victims onto the roadside, where they are picked up and rescued by a sympathetic trucker following in pursuit of the fleeing bus. And that's really about all there is to it. From the very offset expectations are set suitably low. In an early scene, before the orgy of depravity begins, we see one of the sadistic roughnecks sealing himself into a ladies toilet cubicle, rifling through the soiled tampon bucket and inserting the bloody swabs up his nose while attempting to bring himself to climax. Thereafter, the film follows a predictable course of nubile young girls sobbing and screaming 'yada!' as they are stripped naked and brutalised by their assailants, who growl and gurn with their victim's panties on their heads. All of this is set to a truly horrible sequenced synth soundtrack that could only have come from the early '80s.



above: Posters showing a number of vintage titles screening at a second-run pink theater in Tokyo, including Hisayasu Satô's *Angel in the Dark* (1993) and *The Real Performance: Married Life Edition* (1985), one of Nikkatsu's Roman 'X' hardcore video productions, this time directed by "Doctor R" (picture by Jason Gray)

As the decade progressed, Nikkatsu's attempts at retaining its competitive edge resulted in a string of titles that pushed the boundaries further, many produced by Kan Mukai's Shishi Pro company, including Shûji Kataoka's four-film *Subway Serial Rape* series, running from 1985 to 1988. Kataoka's assistant director on the first film, a certain Hisayasu Satô, also conjured up some of the most shocking images ever produced within the genre, in films such as *Distorted Sense of Touch* (1985), *Lustmord* (1987) and *RE-WIND* (1988), but though his films proved controversial with many critics, they were staged in such a sophisticated fashion that they warrant looking at in more detail in a later chapter.

Prior to directing the final part in Nikkatsu's *Angel Guts* series, Ishii continued to write scripts for a number of the company's other releases, including: Fumihiko Katô's *Oniroku Dan: Young Girl Wooden Horse Torture* (1982); Hiroyuki Nasu's *Rouge* in 1984; and Shinji Sômai's *Love Hotel* in 1985, usually with characters named Nami and Muraki. In fact, the characters endured way past Ishii's time at Nikkatsu into his mainstream filmmaking career throughout the '90s. His later sleek thrillers, such as *A Night in the Nude* (1993), *Alone in the Night* (1994) and *Gonin* (1995) almost all featured a femme fatale named Nami Tsuchiya at their dark heart, and frequently a love-struck dupe named Muraki too. The character disappeared from Ishii's work in the late '90s, before resurfacing in his 2007 film *The Brutal Hopelessness of Love* (aka *Nami: The Actress*).

It was with *Red Vertigo* (1988) however that Ishii finally fulfilled his youthful ambition of becoming a filmmaker, and bearing in mind that it was made on a slightly lower budget than Nikkatsu's norm – who at this time were increasingly releasing films produced out of house (this film was made by a company with close to links to Nikkatsu, called New Century Producers, or NCP) – it marked an auspicious start for a man who would become one of the slickest and most visually talented directors of the '90s. The film bears many of Ishii's stylistic hallmarks, such as exteriors bathed in neon and drenched in pouring rain, a colour palette made up of vibrant primary reds, and night scenes bathed in azure blues. While all of these elements were present in the previous films, here they are given a prominence far beyond their earlier usage. As with the other films, some might question the strange sexual politics and the verve with which Ishii stages his scenes of savage eroticism. Nevertheless, *Red Vertigo* often feels more like art than exploitation, drawing its expressive power through atmosphere and location rather than narrative.

This is just as well, as the plot is the slightest and least satisfying of the series, with Ishii dramatically boxing himself in at an early stage by reducing the drama to just two characters, and the sex scenes going on far longer than required, predominantly shot in a single take from fixed camera positions, presumably due to shooting time restraints. The story opens one

evening as an on-duty nurse, Nami (Mayako Katsuragi), is called into a dark, deserted ward where she is raped by a patient. When she returns home to the apartment she shares with her photographer boyfriend Kenji (Hirofumi Kobayashi), she finds him embroiled with one of his models (Yûho Yamauchi). Distraught, she flees into the street and is immediately hit by a car. As if things couldn't get any worse, the driver, Muraki (Naoto Takenaka) happens to be a bankrupt and emotionally vulnerable stockbroker on the run from his creditors, and he immediately abducts her. Hiding out in a deserted hotel, the two, in an unconvincing plot development that seems unrealistically rooted in immature fantasy, fall in love.

Ishii's debut unfortunately coincided with Roman Porno's demise. However, he did manage to direct one further entry in the series, *Red Lightning*, which was released some six years later, in 1994, by Argo Project.²⁹⁷ Graced with a higher budget than its predecessor, Ishii's return to the material is bigger and plusher than many of the original Roman Porno films. This time Nami (Maiko Kawakami) is a photographer commissioned to take location pictures at an Adult Video shoot. The scene she is covering, of a high school girl being raped by a thug in a deserted warehouse, causes long-repressed memories of a similar incident in her own past to bubble to the surface. Attempting to get over her trauma, she starts drinking heavily, ending up one night going to a love hotel with the AV scriptwriter. When she awakens the next morning, there is a bloody corpse lying beside her with a knife plunged into it.

It is tempting to wonder whether the international success of Paul Verhoeven's *Basic Instinct* in 1992 had some bearing on the style and content of both this and Ishii's heavily film noir-influenced predecessor, *A Night in the Nude* (1993). If Verhoeven's film was something of a *succès de scandale* in the West, then Ishii's equally glossy and straight-faced exploitation picture takes things several steps further, with a steamy lesbian scene lasting over 5 minutes, several brutal rapes, and a plainly gratuitous shower sequence of Nami rinsing the blood from her naked body during the final credits, worthy of Brian De Palma at his sleaziest (circa *Dressed to Kill* and *Body Double*). With its long gliding camera movements and primary coloured lighting, *Red Lightning* serves as a stylistic highpoint of the series, and fans of the other films, and of Ishii in general, certainly won't be disappointed. However, as is often the case with Ishii's films, there's the impression that the material doesn't really merit all the technique. While its production circumstances mean that *Red Lightning* doesn't warrant much further discussion within these pages, it does present an interesting marker point in the rapid evolution of Ishii's characteristic aesthetic, that would peak with *Gonin* and *Black Angel* (1997), and as a remnant of a brief lost period

when such cruel and lavishly-realised erotic fantasies could be passed off as mainstream entertainment. Ishii would return to the rape-'n'-revenge genre with *Freeze Me* (2000), and later make the most explicit and exploitative film of his entire career, with a big-budget loose adaptation of *Flower and Snake* (2004). But more about that particular film later.

For now it is sufficient to point out that the cases of Takashi Ishii and Toshiharu Ikeda highlight one of the most important roles Roman Porno played in the '80s. With the established apprenticeship system provided by the major studios disappearing during the previous decade, the pink film/Roman Porno route provided one of the few ways for directors to gain experience, in a professional environment, of handling 35mm film stock, writing scripts, directing casts and crews, and making movies that would be shown in cinemas. At a time when Nikkatsu was the only one of the majors taking on new staff as trainees, the company presented would-be directors an opportunity to gain experience working in a proper film environment. Whilst the first wave of Nikkatsu directors from the '70s rarely had much impact on the broader film industry, some of the top commercial directors of the '90s and beyond owed their grounding in filmmaking technique to their early careers at the company.

For example, in 1997, *Lost Paradise* – a melancholic romance starring Kôji Yakusho, about two professionals past their first flush of youth who find love outside of their respective marriages and decide to end their affair on a high note by poetically committing *shinjû* (love suicide) on the slopes of Mount Fuji – was the top-grossing domestic live-action feature at the local box-office.²⁹⁸ Its director, Yoshimitsu Morita, had also enjoyed a number of critical and commercial successes prior to this smash, most conspicuously with the Sôseki Natsume adaptation *Sorekara* (1985). But after first emerging into the eyes of the industry with his self-made 8mm feature, *Live in Chigasaki*, playing at the Pia Film Festival in 1978 – and we shall look closely at the role this organisation has played since the '80s in the next chapter – his early career was bolstered by a brief spell at Nikkatsu, where he made *True: A Rumoured Stripper* (1982) and *Pink Cut: Loving Hard, Loving Deep* (1983). His next mainstream film, *Family Game* (1983), a satire of the modern Japanese family that has achieved a near-iconic status in its own country, was produced and released by the Art Theatre Guild, but it was also substantially funded by Nikkatsu and New Century Producers.

Shûsuke Kaneko may well be known best for his efforts at bringing about the triumphant return of the *kaijû eiga*, with titles like *Gamera: The Guardian of the Universe* (1995) – which resurrected Daiei's fire-breathing flying turtle star – and *Godzilla, Mothra and King Ghidorah: Giant Monsters All-Out Attack* (2001), but his origins were a long way from the world of

pyrotechnics and rubber monster suits. He began in the film world as an assistant director at Nikkatsu, mainly to Kôyû Ohara, and later directed around half a dozen films for the studio, beginning with *Kôichirô Uno's Wet Strike* (1984), set in the world of tennis. (Born 1934, Uno was, incidentally, a writer who appeared in the '60s and was especially popular for his humorous treatment of erotic subject matter, usually told from a woman's perspective. Nikkatsu first turned to his work with Chûsei Sone's *Sigh* in 1973, and shot a number more of his stories before launching a whole range of films based on his work, as they did with Oniroku Dan. The *Kôichirô Uno* series lasted from 1976 to 1985.)

Shun Nakahara is likely to be best remembered for his feature *Cherry Orchard* (1990), an ambitious portrayal, shot in real-time, of the friendships and the tensions that emerge within an all-girl class of high school students in the run up to their end-of-year performance of Anton Chekhov's play of the same name; the film was voted number one of the year in Kinema Junpô's Best Ten. He also made: *Twelve Gentle Japanese* (1991), a parody of *Twelve Angry Men* in which the jury members adhere so closely to the non-confrontational national stereotype that no one dares to disagree with the others; *Concent* (2002), an adaptation of a novel by Randy Taguchi that attempts to probe the Freudian subconscious of its confused young professional heroine following the suicide of her socially reclusive brother; and *DV: Domestic Violence* (2005), a digitally-shot exposé of the social issue spelt out by its title. Before these however, he bolstered Nikkatsu's back-catalogue with seven films: from his debut in 1982 with *Candidate for Seduction*; through titles like *Slave Contract: Whip and High Heels* (1982) and *Miss Eve's Petals* (1984), which made good use of the full-figured Nikkatsu starlet known solely as Eve; up until *Bridal Night Sea* (1984).

Yôichi Higashi was the talent behind the 1996 international film festival hit *Village of Dreams*. His earlier picture, *Love Letter* – another film scripted by Yôzô Tanaka – was released by Nikkatsu in 1981, after the director had established himself with a number of adventurous works in the previous decade, including two films distributed by ATG.

Hideo Nakata, director of the immensely influential modern horror *Ring* (1998) never got to direct anything while training at Nikkatsu, but he was later fond of mentioning how his early experiences as an assistant to Masaru Konuma on a number of the Roman Porno veteran's later titles served as the inspiration for his straight-to-video Nikkatsu work *Secret Camera Pick-Up Technique* (1996).²⁹⁹ The memories moved him so much that, even after he'd achieved major international acclaim, he made the documentary homage to his mentor, *Sadistic & Masochistic* (2001).

Many of the directors linked with Nikkatsu who crossed over into the mainstream around this time did

so because of an organisation called the Director's Company. Established in 1982, its president, Susumu Miyasaka, was an important figure in advertising and PR, but rather idealistically decided that it was important to establish a place outside of the major system where young filmmakers who had proved their mettle elsewhere – maybe working as directors or assistant directors in companies making less artistically ambitious program pictures, like Nikkatsu or the pink production companies – could spread their wings a little. The Director's Company is best looked upon less as a commercial enterprise than as a production environment, with links to ATG, Kadokawa and Nikkatsu, as well as a few other smaller companies including New Century Producers and Kitty Films (which outside of its live action features, also created TV animation, including the episodes of *Urusei Yatsura*, Rumiko Takahashi's hit manga that provided Mamoru Oshii with early anime directing experience).

The original directors who joined Miyasaka to make up what might be best described as a guild of new aspiring auteurs included Kazuhiko Hasegawa, Toshiharu Ikeda, Sôgo Ishii, Kazuyuki Izutsu, Kiyoshi Kurosawa, Kichitarô Negishi, Kazuki Ômori, Shinji Sômai and Banmei Takahashi. Some of these, like Ikeda, Izutsu and Takahashi, we've encountered before. Others are less well known, though they would emerge as core talents within the industry over the next decade. For example, before his premature death on 9 September, 2001, Shinji Sômai (born 23 January, 1948) was considered one of the best directors in Japan among his peers, establishing a reputation at an early stage with the Yôzô Tanaka-scripted kitsch classic, *Sailor Suit and Machine Gun* (1981), starring the then-popular teen idol Hiroko Yakushimaru. Later works such as *Wait and See* (1998) and his last, *Kaza-hana* (2001), were just as powerful and just as well-regarded by local critics, though sadly he remains unjustly overlooked outside of his home country.

Sômai began his career at Nikkatsu in the '70s, a little later than one of his Director's Company contemporaries Kazuhiko Hasegawa, who had written a couple of scripts while he was there, as well as serving as assistant director on a number of early Roman Porno titles. The two left at the same time, with Sômai working as one of the assistants on Hasegawa's 1979 debut for Kitty Film, the cult classic *The Man Who Stole the Sun* (1979), which he co-wrote with Leonard Schrader (brother of *Taxi Driver* screenwriter Paul). While *The Man Who Stole the Sun* was to prove Hasegawa's final work as a director, after helming *Sailor Suit and Machine Gun*, Sômai went on to make *The Catch* (1983) – a heroic tale of tuna fishermen, scripted by Yôzô Tanaka from a novel by Akira Yoshimura – for Shochiku, and worked as assistant director to Shûji Terayama on *The Grass Labyrinth* (1983). He directed two films with the Director's Company, both released in August 1985. One

was the definitive youth movie of the decade, *Typhoon Club* (1985), distributed by Toei. The other was the Takashi Ishii-scripted *Love Hotel* (1985), an erotic thriller released by Nikkatsu as part of their Roman Porno line.

Kichitarô Negishi, who is credited as one of the producers of Ikeda's first film produced by the Director's Company, *Mermaid Legend*, also served his apprenticeship at Nikkatsu, where he directed eight features including the Roman Porno remake of *Crazed Fruit* (1981) and *Cabaret Diary* (1982). The latter looked at the comings and goings of a number of hostesses and their clients at a topless bar in Tokyo's hedonistic paradise of Kabukichô (the meaning of *kyabare* in Japan is closer to 'lounge bar' than Folies Bergère-style musical extravaganza). Negishi is another director who has never really received due recognition for his mainstream film work outside of Japan, although his ATG-produced *Distant Thunder* (1981) – which like *Cabaret Diary* was scripted by former Wakamatsu Pro collaborator Haruhiko Arai – was praised by a number of foreign writers such as Donald Richie.³⁰⁰ Also, much later, his poignant family drama set in Hokkaido's traditional draft horse sled-racing world, *What the Snow Brings*, won a raft of awards at the 2005 Tokyo International Film Festival, including Best Film, Best Director, Best Lead Actor, and the Audience Award. The Director's Company produced Negishi's *Half Eternity* in 1987.

Kazuki Ômori's work includes the Godzilla movies *Godzilla vs. Biollante* (1989) and *Godzilla vs. King Ghidorah* (1991), and the Shanghai-set thriller *T.R.Y.* (2003), but his first credit is as an assistant director on the bizarre-sounding Nikkatsu-distributed pink movie, *Campus Porno: Pierrot's Tits* (1974), directed by Tadashi Sasaki. He appears to have been involved in the Director's Company productions in the '80s, mainly in a scriptwriting capacity.

If nothing else, we can say that the organisation, which was dissolved due to bankruptcy in 1990, presents an elucidating nexus between personnel from the pink film world, Nikkatsu and other areas of independent cinema. For example, one might never have guessed that *Japanese Torture* director Banmei Takahashi took the role of producer on Sôgo Ishii's wild satire *Crazy Family* (1984), produced by the Director's Company in association with ATG. The organisation's connections with other companies also suggests another, arguably more fruitful, framework through which to consider Japanese cinema, rather than the traditionally-received wisdom of the *auteurist* approach, in which the director is seen as the sole guiding hand responsible for the finished work. So far, little information is available in the English language on the histories of actual production companies in Japan, the people that owned or ran them, the relationships with their contracted staff and their relationships with one another – all of which became especially complex from the '70s onwards, after the collapse of the established

studio system. The traditional focus of research has always been squarely on the director, with little regard as to his employment circumstances, but by the very nature of the business, filmmakers hardly work in isolation, and their production environment is a large factor determining the nature of their output.

The final member of the Director's Guild not yet mentioned in any detail is Kiyoshi Kurosawa. Kurosawa was something of an odd man out among the list of other names, in that at the time he joined the organisation, he had yet to be employed as a director on a commercial project, nor had he even had much in the way of professional experience within the industry (contrary to some reports, Kurosawa never worked at Nikkatsu in his early career). Born in 1955, Kurosawa had directed a number of 8mm independent productions initiated by himself while studying sociology at Rikkyo University in the late '70s, one of which, *Vertigo College* (1980), received a prize at the 4th Pia Film Festival in 1981, and led to work as one of four assistant directors on Sômai's *Sailor Suit and Machine Gun* (1981). Quickly establishing a reputation for his resourceful and resolutely single-minded approach to independent filmmaking, the future director of such cerebral chillers as *Cure* (1997), *Charisma* (2000) and *Pulse* (2001) was soon afforded the chance to make his debut. Unusually, it was one of only a handful of films the Director's Company made for a pink distributor. It was also Kurosawa's only ever pink film, and it was almost weird enough to put an end to his film career even before it had begun properly.

Kandagawa Pervert Wars (1983) came about through Kurosawa's connection with fellow Director's Company member Banmei Takahashi, whose earlier *Wolf* (1982) – the first film produced by the organisation – had been distributed by Joypack Film, the non-pink sister company of Million Film. After Takahashi introduced Kurosawa, Million offered him the chance to helm his own project for the *seijin eiga* market. Clearly taking the view that a director could get away with anything within this genre, Kurosawa constructed a scenario involving Akiko (Usagi Asô), a young girl living in a tenement block in the suburban area of Kandagawa who, deciding she is tired of work, and irked by the constant attentions of her boyfriend (played by Tatsuya Mori, a regular performer in Kurosawa's early films who later directed the fascinating documentaries on the Aum Shinrikyô cult, *A* and *A2*, released in 1998 and 2001 respectively), takes to staying in her one room 'mansion' apartment. Here she starts using a large telescope to spy upon a new household consisting of a mother and her son who have just moved into a similar building across the Kanda River. The son appears to be studying for exams, though more often than not, whenever Akiko peeks, he is having his exam tensions massaged away by his mother. Fearing she is witness to a case of domestic sexual abuse Akiko hatches a plan, together with her boyfriend and another

confidante of hers in a neighbouring apartment, to make it to the other side of the river to rescue the young man from his mother's clutches.

Kandagawa Pervert Wars comes across a bit like *Rear Window* played as a homage to Godard during the early self-referential phase of his career, circa *À bout de souffle* (1960) and *Une femme est une femme* (1961). The film is full of moments and devices to draw the attention to the fabric of the film. It opens with the rather precious image of a solitary figure standing on his balcony silhouetted against a cluttered suburban skyline at dusk, clutching a flute and playing a simple refrain. This melody continues in the background while the viewpoint switches to Akiko and her boyfriend adopting a number of acrobatic positions in her bedroom as they attempt to spice up their lovemaking, before she nudges him aside. The opposite room, spied through the telescope, in which the young son attempts to study while tormented by his lusty mother provides the clearest example of Kurosawa's *modus operandi* in making something out of nothing: it is little more than a single room with just a music stand, a desk, and a few piles of books. Its walls are adorned with the son's 'study notes', a jumble of English language text actually containing the titles of films, many of which, like *Riot in Cell Block 11*, *The Big Bad Mama*, *Alphaville* and *The Last Run*, contain in-jokes and hints as to Kurosawa's personal tastes and influences. After climaxing in a bizarre *al fresco* sex bout on top of a building from which both participants, after making it to the other side of the river, end up toppling to their deaths, the end credits are narrated by a solitary male voice over the film's final shot of this empty skyline. They read like a roll-call of what would later become some of the leading figures of late-'90s independent cinema: Akihiko Shiota (*Moonlight Whispers*, *Canary*); Kunitoshi Manda (*UN loved*); Toshiyuki Mizutani (*Isola: Multiple Personality Girl*); and Masayuki Suô (*Shall We Dance?*) are but a few of those listed.

Unfortunately, in a filmmaking field in which budgetary restrictions make such concessions as post-dubbed dialogue a necessity rather than a stylistic choice, Kurosawa's playful mannerisms and filmbuff in-jokes must have come across to his backers as sarcastic and irreverent. He was given one more chance within the pink genre, and set to work on *College Girl: Shameful Seminar*. This time, upon viewing what he'd shot, his employees at Million Film thought Kurosawa had gone too far... or perhaps actually not far enough: giving the excuse that the resulting film was not sexy enough, they shelved it. With the assistance of the Director's Company, Kurosawa bought back the unreleased footage and reworked it to make the non-pink film *The Excitement of the Do-Re-Mi-Fa Girl* (1985). Nevertheless, the incident set back the wilful director's career by several years, and though Kurosawa never considered himself above pot-boiler material, his

quirky style later found a better match in the yakuza and horror genres than the sex film.

Masayuki Suô, who was Banmei Takahashi's assistant director on *Wolf* and second assistant director on *Kandagawa Pervert Wars* (and in fact appeared in that film in a small role as the apartment block manager) had better luck in bringing a genre-bending approach to the pink film the following year, but perhaps he had a more sympathetic production company behind him: *Abnormal Family: Older Brother's Bride* (1984) was produced by the more creatively indulgent Kokuei and released by Shintoho. Shooting from his own script, Suô's only ever pink film counts as one of the wittiest in the entire genre. It bundles together the plots of a number of Yasujirô Ozu's most iconic films to playfully poke fun at the cosy familiarity local viewers would have had with them, and their hallowed status within the canon of classical Japanese cinema – the very antithesis of the '80s pink film. The visual approach also references Ozu. Shooting is often from a low angle in medium close-up, the characters positioned at unorthodox positions to the camera, for example facing directly out of the screen or seated at a 90-degree angle with their heads turned toward the camera to emulate the director's trademark mismatched eye-line effect. The dialogue is delivered in a prosaic but nuanced manner, with body movements unnaturally stiff and controlled, and facial expressions inscrutable. Suô plays upon these formal elements familiar from Ozu's films to suggest the rift between the way in which his characters act and the way they behave. The whimsical melody repeated on the soundtrack also suggests a sense of wholesomeness at odds with what's on screen.

The film follows the movements of five members of a model middle-class suburban household through the eyes of the voluptuous young Yuriko (Kaoru Kaze), newly married into it, to the over-sexed eldest son Kôichi (Shirô Shimomoto), who spends much of the early portion of the running time appeasing his ravenous and markedly kinky sexual appetite with this new bride. Younger brother Kazuo (Kei Shutô) suffers from study stress, and sees this new arrival to the household as one possible source of release. Meanwhile, every morning the daughter Akiko (Mika Yamaji) dons her OL uniform, but as soon as she's slipped out of the eyesight of the rest of her family, she heads straight to a workplace that offers much more in the way of personal fulfilment and financial incentive than the office – a 'soapland' massage parlour. Her secret is discovered when Kôichi, while searching outside his marriage for quick gratification, turns up one day as one of her clients. Meanwhile, father (Ren Ôsugi) remains a silent fixture behind his newspaper, nodding sagely at the head of the table, while getting increasingly steadily sozzled on saké and waxing wistfully about the *mama-san* (Usagi Asô) running a nearby bar, who reminds him

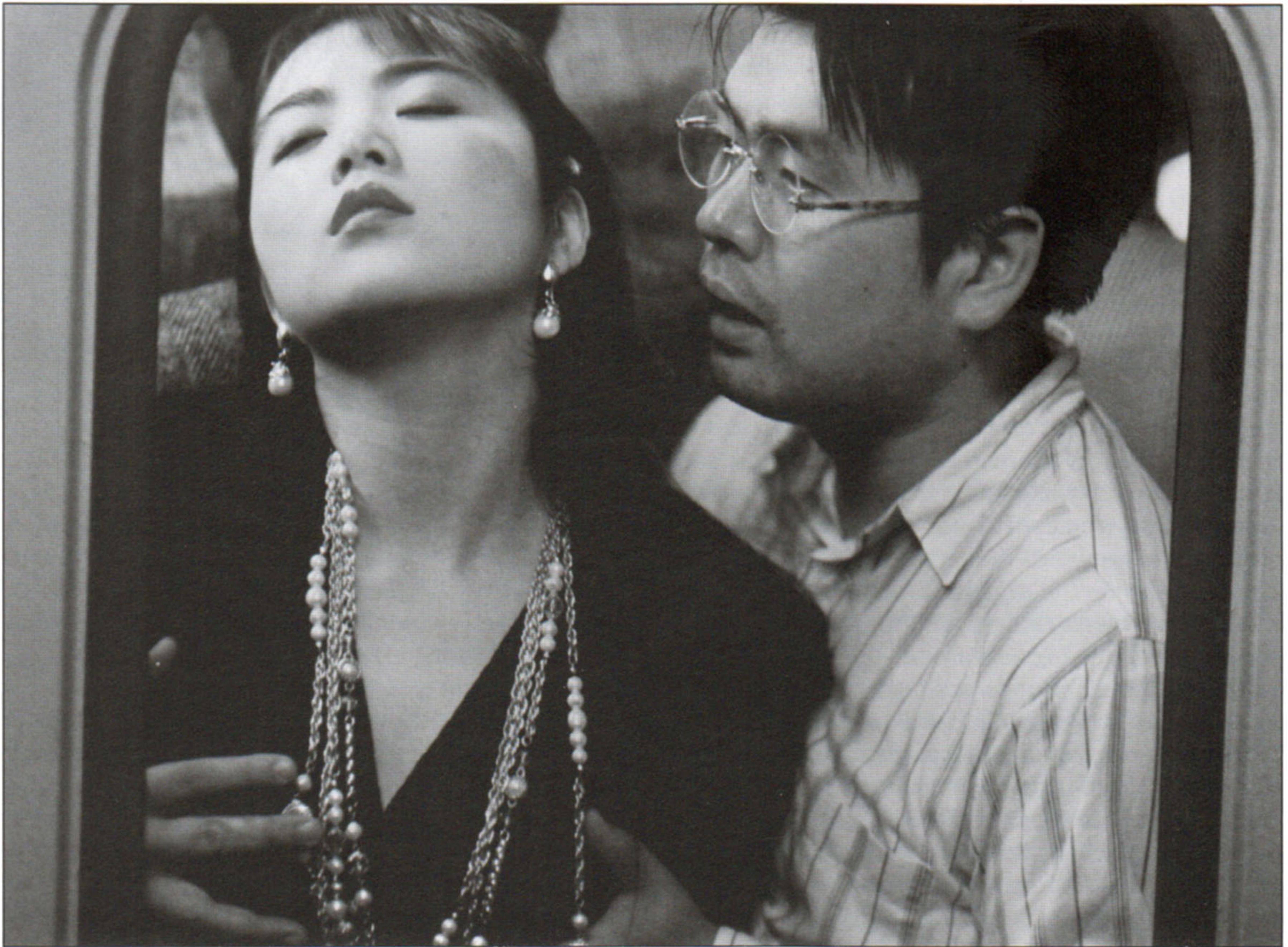


above: Kaoru Kaze as the newly-wed Yuriko in *Abnormal Family: Older Brother's Bride* (1984), from the future director of *Shall We Dance?* ©Shintoho

of his dead wife – a girl to whom Kôichi regularly turns for a bit of rough extra-marital SM play.

Suô quickly moved on from pink filmmaking by way of his appointment directing the 'making-of' films for Jûzô Itami's hit comedies *A Taxing Woman* (1988) and *A Taxing Woman's Return* (1988). In fact, Kiyoshi Kurosawa also owes Itami for a similar opportunity as the director on Itami Production's *Poltergeist*-inspired *Sweet Home* (1989) – although this particular relationship soured after Kurosawa took Itami to court, claiming post-production tampering on the finished film, an incident that did little to give Kurosawa's career the boost it needed at this point. For Suô however, his employment by Itami marked a convenient stepping stone from his early masterpiece of the pink genre to his popular comedies *Fancy Dance* (1991), *Sumo Do, Sumo Don't* (also 1991) and his later, best-known, title, *Shall We Dance?* (1996).

Ren Ôsugi's appearance in *Abnormal Family* in the equivalent role to that usually taken by Chishû Ryû in Ozu's late films, as the solid but silent patriarchal presence around which much of the family activity revolves, is worthy of some further comment. Born in Tokushima Prefecture on 27 September, 1951, this respected actor of both the stage and screen became one of the most ubiquitous faces in '90s Japanese cinema, with over 300 credited movie appearances. He's most familiar to international audiences through his supporting parts in the yakuza films of 'Beat' Takeshi Kitano, like *Sonatine* (1993), *Fireworks* (1997) – in which he played Kitano's wheelchair-bound former police colleague – and *Brother* (2001). A member of the Tenkei Gekijô theatrical company from 1974 until it dissolved in 1988, Ôsugi made his screen debut in Banmei Takahashi's *Tightly Bound Sacrifice* in 1980. In fact, many of Ôsugi's early appearances were in pink films, playing such unglamorous roles as rapists and bondage masters, all the way up until his final outing in the genre in 1988, in the fourth and final film in Shûji Kataoka's *Subway Serial Rape* series, *Lover Hunting*, produced by



above: Yumika Hayashi gets rubbed up the wrong way in Akira Fukamachi's *Molester Train: Flagrant Mischief Maker* (1994), one of many films carrying on the series created by Shinya Yamamoto and taken that one step further by Yôjirô Takita at Shintoho. ©Shintoho

Kan Mukai's *Shishi Pro* for Nikkatsu. In 1983, he'd made for an imposing figure in Yôjirô Takita's *Serial Rape*, a gritty thriller far more inventive than its title suggests. The opening scene, which depicts the sexual assault and strangulation of a schoolgirl in a secluded forest clearing, turns out to be part of a pink film which is itself self-referentially entitled *Serial Rape* and is playing in a theatre at which Ren Ôsugi is working as a projectionist. It nevertheless has a closer connection with reality than it initially appears, as the tattoo of a snake prominent within the film on the rapist's thigh is identical to one sported by Ôsugi, and it is revealed that the scriptwriter is the younger sister of the victim of this true-life incident that happened some twelve years before.

Such shady early credits are not unusual for Japanese actors from this period, nor did they seem to serve as particular impediments to successful acting careers. Naoto Takenaka, the omnipresent actor-comedian-singer-TV personality perhaps most familiar though his funnyman roles in Masayuki Suô's *Sumo Do, Sumo Don't* (1991) and *Shall We Dance?* (1996), and Takashi Miike's *The Happiness of the Katakuris* (2001) – as well as the director of several films himself, including *Nowhere Man* (1991) and *Tokyo Biyori* (1997) – provides

another good example. Takenaka got his first screen role in a tiny cameo in another Yôjirô Takita film, *Molester Train: Underwear Inspection* (1984). Though this was, strictly speaking, his only pink film appearance, Takenaka continued throughout the '80s balancing his work in mainstream features, like Jûzô Itami's foodie comedy *Tampopo* (1985) and Hideo Gosha's *Tracked* (1985), with other erotic films made by Nikkatsu, like Chûsei Sone's *Twilight Tribe* (1984) and Tatsumi Kumashiro's *Love Bites Back* (1988).³⁰¹ He first played the male lead in Takashi Ishii's *Angel Guts: Red Vertigo* (1988), beginning an association with the director that would continue into lead roles in *A Night in the Nude* (1993) and *Gonin* (1995). The actor later reprised his role in Ishii's film – that of a reclusive loner with strange romantic ideas – in Ben Wada's inappropriately perky romantic drama *Perfect Education* (1999), written by Kaneto Shindô, in which he kidnaps a schoolgirl and keeps her captive until she falls in love with him. Though not a pink title, it had its share of steamy scenes, and few films demonstrate the cultural differences between Japan and the West, in terms of what is considered acceptable for mainstream entertainment, better than this distinctly non-PC set up, which was reiterated in a

further five titles all based on stories by the woman novelist Michiko Matsuda.³⁰² Takenaka turned up in cameos in all the later entries, even though by this stage he was a familiar personality on TV, and continued to appear in many major domestic movie releases.

It was with films such as *Molester Train: Underwear Inspection* that the director Yôjirô Takita proved himself as the true inheritor of Shinya Yamamoto's comic crown, while proving that the pink film of the '80s took just as an excessive approach to humour as it did to violence: there's potentially plenty to offend in these riotous offerings in which a string of women are habitually groped on public transport. You can say what you want about the series, but at the very least, Takita can be credited for bringing a sense of fun to proceedings notably absent from his contemporaries' work. One of the rising stars of Mukai's Shishi Pro after his debut with *Molester Woman Teacher* (1981), Takita went on to make almost a dozen entries in the series instigated by Yamamoto, beginning with *Molester Train: Keep On Going* (1982), and almost managed to make it completely his own. In fact, though the title of the series was never copyrighted, he remained so loyal to the pink industry that when Nikkatsu asked him to make a *Molester Train* film to be released through its cinemas, he gave them *Molester Bus* (1985) and *Molester Parcel Delivery* (1986) instead. Not that such token gestures really mattered, as by the end of the decade most of the rival *pinku eiga* companies had picked up the ball and ran with it, and the *Molester Train* series became one of the most prominent mainstays of the field.

As directed by Takita, the films were vaguely reminiscent of the lewd, slapstick antics of British comedian Benny Hill, but in terms of political

incorrectness, they passed light years beyond. Lewd panty shots, a prurient obsession with feminine hygiene and sniggering humour are of course all part and parcel of the series. Still, the plots were inventive and fast moving, the humour irreverent and often very funny, and Takita's ability to achieve impressive results on limited means was much in evidence. *Molester Train: Momoe's Butt* (1983) took a swipe at the hugely popular singing and acting idol of the '70s, Momoe Yamaguchi, as the fading starlet, played by an uncanny look-alike credited as Momoe Yamauchi (the only role for this particular actress) attempts to re-launch her career on TV and in the process ends up caught in an uncompromising position which is broadcast on one of the huge video screens outside Shibuya station. *Molester Train: Underwear Inspection* makes use of two recurrent characters deployed by Takita in many of the films, the nimble-fingered Detective Kuroda (Yukijirô Hotaru) and his slinky sidekick Hamako (Yûka Takemura), who become involved in a whodunit mystery revolving around a valuable black pearl discovered in the palm of a dismembered hand found by a Japanese soldier in Manchuria in 1930. Comic depths are plumbed in a Cinderella-like sequence of Hotaru scouring train carriages in an attempt to work out which particular lady left the vaginal inkblot pattern found displayed on the wall of the bedroom of an early murder victim. In *Molester Train: Absolutely Secret Real Sex* (1984), these two regular performers are recast as rival ninjas whisked, by a freak time-slip, from the Warring States, or Sengoku Period (1478–1605), to contemporary Tokyo with little more than the clothes on their backs (which are frequently shed) and an ancient coded scroll leading to buried treasure. Here the pair's paths diverge, with



above: Yûka Takemura assailed by a train groper in Yôjirô Takita's rudely comic *Molester Train: Underwear Inspection* (1984). ©Shintoho

the sleek Takemura inadvertently stumbling into a soapland brothel, where she ends up slaying one of the clients. After escaping, she finds herself fondled on a commuter train by a lecherous talent-spotter who sees the opportunity to cast her as part of a medieval-themed singing and dancing double act modelled on the then-immensely successful pop-combo Pink Lady. Meanwhile, her touchy-feely opponent, played with customary comic overstatement by Hotaru, shacks up with a cryptologist who gives him a modern-day makeover, complete with baseball cap, shorts and an Aloha shirt, as she attempts to follow him down the treasure trail.

Takita delivered more of his characteristically low-brow belly laughs in his films made outside the *Molester Train* series, such as the hospital-set *Pink Physical Check-Up* (1985), in which Hotaru plays a bed-ridden Hanshin Tigers fan who is dragged into a fraudulent insurance plot by the ailing priest (played by Ren Ôsugi) in the bed next to him. The scam involves stealing two corpses stored in the hospital mortuary down in the basement, to pass off as the priest's brothers, lost at sea in a tragic rubber dinghy accident. Meanwhile, Hotaru's daughter-in-law (Mako Takigawa) is one of the scores of pretty young nurses applying their bedside techniques to both patients and doctors alike, whilst the head surgeon, disturbed in the middle of a stomach operation, roams the pristine corridors, scalpel in hand, in search of his missing spectacles. Again, there's nothing too sophisticated here, as proceedings begin with a medical demonstration in front of a roomful of nubile nurses, all doodling penises in their notebooks, as one young intern strips off and sits, legs akimbo, behind a polystyrene sheet as the doctor shows them how to insert a suppository. Along with such bountiful sexual content, Takita gives us oodles of smutty sight gags (a set of surgical gloves being used as condoms), gross-out scenes involving severed body parts, and an under-cranked Keystone Cops-style chase to round things off.

Films such as these quickly earmarked its director for later success, with Takita's first break in the mainstream coming with *No More Comics* in 1986, which provided an early film role for 'Beat' Takeshi Kitano in keeping with the star's anarchic TV image. This led to a plethora of high-profile hits throughout the following decades, including the mystical martial arts fantasies *The Ying-Yang Master* (parts 1 and 2, released in 2001 and 2003 respectively) and *Ashura* (2004), along with the samurai drama *When the Last Sword Is Drawn* (2003). In fact, one might describe Takita as one of the pink industry's most successful discoveries.

Pink Physical Check-Up was one of the many pink films produced by Shishi Pro especially for release by Nikkatsu, which by the mid-'80s was increasingly turning to the pink production houses to fill its schedules. As Daisuke Asakura recalls, "Nikkatsu had

directors and assistant directors as employees under their wings, so they had to shoot the films with their own directors. But Nikkatsu would also want to make good films at a cheap price. And the directors in Pink Films are used to this way of thinking."³⁰³ Another was Genji Nakamura's Yû Pro, which provided an early training ground for two other directors who emerged as important filmmakers in the '90s.

The first of these was Ryûichi Hiroki, a director who, since leaving the pink industry in the late '80s, has proven himself one of the most versatile, as well as the most prolific, directors of his generation. Born in 1954, since the turn of the millennium he has received considerable interest from international critics for his strong female-centred dramas *Tokyo Trash Baby* (2000), *Vibrator* (2003) and *It's Only Talk* (2005). He has also undertaken a number of more commercial major studio projects as a director-for-hire, like: *I Want to Make Love Until the Ski Slopes Melt* (1995), a romantic drama set on the snowy slopes of New Zealand; *The Silent Big Man* (2004), the story of a mute teacher who goes to teach in a school on an island in the Inland Sea where, despite not being able to speak, he gradually earns the respect of the local community; and the teenage coming-of-age drama *Love on Sunday* (2006).

Hiroki speaks of his early days in the industry during the late '70s without much love: "When I first started wanting to make films, I wrote a pink script and took it to Ôkura Eiga and told them I wanted to make it. They asked if I had any experience, and I just said, 'No'. They told me basically I had to start as an assistant director, so they started me off in this way, working on really boring films. During this time I met someone who was working for Nakamura, and he introduced me. The original script never got made. It wasn't a proper pink film anyway, and I'd hate to see it now if it had been made. It was terrible as an assistant director. Nakamura told me to just try it out for three years, and if I wasn't directing by then, I should just quit. I got lucky, and got my first chance to direct within three years. Being an assistant director was terrible though. There's not enough staff and you are not allowed to sleep, and you get blamed for everything that goes wrong. You do all the shitty work and you think, 'Well, I could make a better film than all these directors.' But then, my debut film was terrible, and I thought I had no talent and I should probably quit. After this failure I went back to being an assistant director again, writing scenarios and stuff like that, and didn't think I wanted to ever direct another film ever again."³⁰⁴

Fortunately, after the disappointment of his debut, *Sexual Abuse! Exposed Woman* (1982) – referred to in his director's bio as *Catch the Woman Out* – Hiroki scored a hit with the trilogy of *Our Season* (1983), *Our Generation* (1983) and *Our Moment* (1985), released by ENK, a new company specialising in distributing films for the gay market, a phenomenon we'll look at in the next chapter.

He went on to make a number of straight titles, including *Teacher, Don't Turn Me On* (1984) and *Pervert and Skirt* (1984), many of which ended up being released by Nikkatsu, including the slick *Bugging Mania: Friday Girl* (1986). In this film, an exhibitionistic TV presenter makes regular performances visible from her bedroom window and is delighted to find herself the subject of the home movies of a voyeuristic freak with a camcorder.

Hiroki's most notorious works from his days at Yû Pro were directed under the name of Gô Ijûin, a pseudonym used by a number of people working at Nakamura Productions during the '80s, including the scriptwriter Hitoshi Ishikawa and Genji Nakamura himself. The first Gô Ijûin film, *The SM* (1984), was released through Million, while Nikkatsu released the next three titles: *The Sexual Abuse* (1985);³⁰⁵ *The Sacrifice* (1986); and *The Sacrifice 2* (1986). According to the director, Hiroki directed only the first three Gô Ijûin films, suggesting *The Sacrifice 2* may have been the work of Genji Nakamura or someone else at Yû Pro. Nikkatsu also released a further three sequels to *The Sexual Abuse*. The Ijûin films presented a somewhat harder look at the world of SM than the comparatively timid fantasies of the Oniroku Dan cycle, and alienated many of the core audience Nikkatsu had built up with their Roman Porno range over the previous decades. According to Hiroki, "When I used this pen name, it gave me a lot more freedom to do what I wanted. I also had a lot of fun making up an entire biography for this guy – how he'd travelled through Europe and how old he was. I even gave telephone interviews as him. The first film I made under the name was like a documentary about this woman who ran an SM club. It was a real culture shock what really went on in there compared with the kind of SM you see in films. This was the real thing. They had a far more radical notion of pleasure than usual people. You really need to trust someone or love them in order to participate in an SM relationship. That's what really interests me about the subject. The greatest show of love for a masochist male is to get punished or, for example, penetrated by someone. It's something I really don't understand in many ways, though in some ways maybe I do, and I want to understand it more. This kind of extreme love doesn't really exist in reality. It only exists in fantasy. So this is something I want to describe in film."³⁰⁶

What sets Hiroki apart from other directors who started out in this field is that he sees the subsequent development of his body of work as belonging to a strict continuum, and that the only real difference between his pink and non-pink films is not so much in their content, but that they are produced for, and targeted at, different audiences. What interests Hiroki are extremes: emotional and behavioural extremes as well as physical ones. He has returned to sadomasochistic themes on several occasions in his non-pink work, and often from surprising angles. For

example, in *I Am an SM Writer*, released originally in Japan as *Season of Uncertainty* (2000), sadomasochism provided the backdrop to a story which, in genre terms, is best probably best viewed as a romantic comedy. The film tells the story of a fetish novelist (maybe based on Oniroku Dan) who is so tied up, if you'll forgive the pun, in committing his own erotic fantasies to the page, that he barely recognises, yet alone fulfils, his wife's emotional and sensual desires, leaving her to seek satisfaction in the arms of her more physical, but unsophisticated, American tennis partner. It is through his wife's eyes that the story is predominantly framed. In *L'amant* (2004) he looked at notions of sexual submission and psychological bondage in the story of a bored high school student who signs a one-year contract with three men to serve exclusively as their shared sex slave. *M* (2007) plays like Luis Buñuel's *Belle de jour* (1967) for the internet age – in it a jaded housewife flirts with danger by becoming a call girl who arranges her liaisons by mobile phone text messages – while *BAKUSHI: The Incredible Lives of Rope-Masters* (2006) is a documentary that takes a fastidious look at the art of the *kinbaku* performers and their models.

As Hiroki says of the development of this fascinating oeuvre, "I didn't change so much as the circumstances around me. I don't really care if you label a film like *I Am an SM Writer* as a pink film, an indie film, a mainstream film or whatever. It's just the film I wanted to make. In that sense there hasn't really been a transformation in my filmmaking. I just want people who don't go to pink theatres to see my work. Even when I was making pink films, I usually described women who were strong-minded or selfish, and there would always be a weak guy who would get tangled up in some situation with them. This sort of relationship is at the core of a film like *I Am an SM Writer*. Also I like to show women who are really into sensuality and eroticism, and to portray their emotional or sexual journey. I've always tried to describe liking sex and falling in love as two different things. The most common narrative in my films is that a man and a woman meet, they like each other and they fall in love and have sex, and then the woman starts worrying, "Maybe I don't really like this guy." This hasn't changed so much between my pink films and films like *Vibrator*."³⁰⁷

The second Yû Pro alumnus to subsequently gain wider recognition was Rokurô Mochizuki, a director whose career has proven tragically uneven, peaking with his moody pre-millennial re-envisioning of the yakuza genre: films like *Another Lonely Hitman* (1995), *Onibi: The Fire Within* (1997) and *Yakuza in Love* (1997) rank among the decade's, and the genre's, best. Born during 1957 in Tokyo's Shinjuku ward, Mochizuki's film career began shortly after his academic one ended, when he dropped out of the literature department of Tokyo's Keio University in 1977. After a few years of low-



above: This promo still for *Woman in a Box: Virgin Sacrifice* (1985), scripted by Gaira, gives the viewer little idea of the film's contents. ©Nikkatsu Corporation
opposite: There's little of Masaru Konuma's usual finesse in the video-shot *Woman in a Box: Virgin Sacrifice* (1985). ©Nikkatsu Corporation

paying dead-end jobs, he started studying film at Image Forum, where he caught the eye of one of his teachers, Katsu Kanai³⁰⁸ who, impressed by his latent talent, invited him to write a script for a film that never eventually went into production. Still, Mochizuki carried on writing scripts, eventually attracting the attention Genji Nakamura, who made one of his scenarios as *Virgin Rope Doll* in 1983, beginning a fruitful period of work at Yû Pro that lasted a couple of years. Mochizuki's scripts for, among other things, two films for the emerging gay porno film market – Nakamura's *Beautiful Mystery* and Hiroki's *Our Season* – certainly wouldn't have hampered this new sub-genre's chances of taking off. His subsequent career path makes for sad reading however. After an early stint as an assistant director for Mamoru Watanabe's *Love Hotel: No Vacancies* (1984) – made for the short-lived Film Workers company and distributed by Nikkatsu – he directed a couple of films distributed by Million, including *Real Performance Video: To Strip* and *Miss Masturbation: My Steamy Private Life* (both 1985). His rise to director coincided with the

declining fortunes of the pink film, and he found himself tempted into the more lucrative escalating market of Adult Video. In 1987, he started his own company, E Staff Union, and proceeded to churn out more than 120 films within this industry.³⁰⁹

At first, Mochizuki rationalised that even if he was making disposable porno videos that were shot in as little as one or two days, he was still making films. "When I was young, Nikkatsu *roman porno* was thought to be the easiest way to start as a director. I had no problem with that, but adult videos were something else again – I wondered whether I was making the right choice. I thought I might never make a straight movie. But I liked movies, and I knew that if I wanted to keep making them, it was either the sexy stuff or nothing."³¹⁰

But after a few years he found himself unable to suppress his old ambitions to make proper films, and the result was the fascinating, clearly autobiographical, *Skinless Night* (1991), the first film to be set in the world of AV. Its story revolves around a jaded porn director named Kayama who, along with a small circle

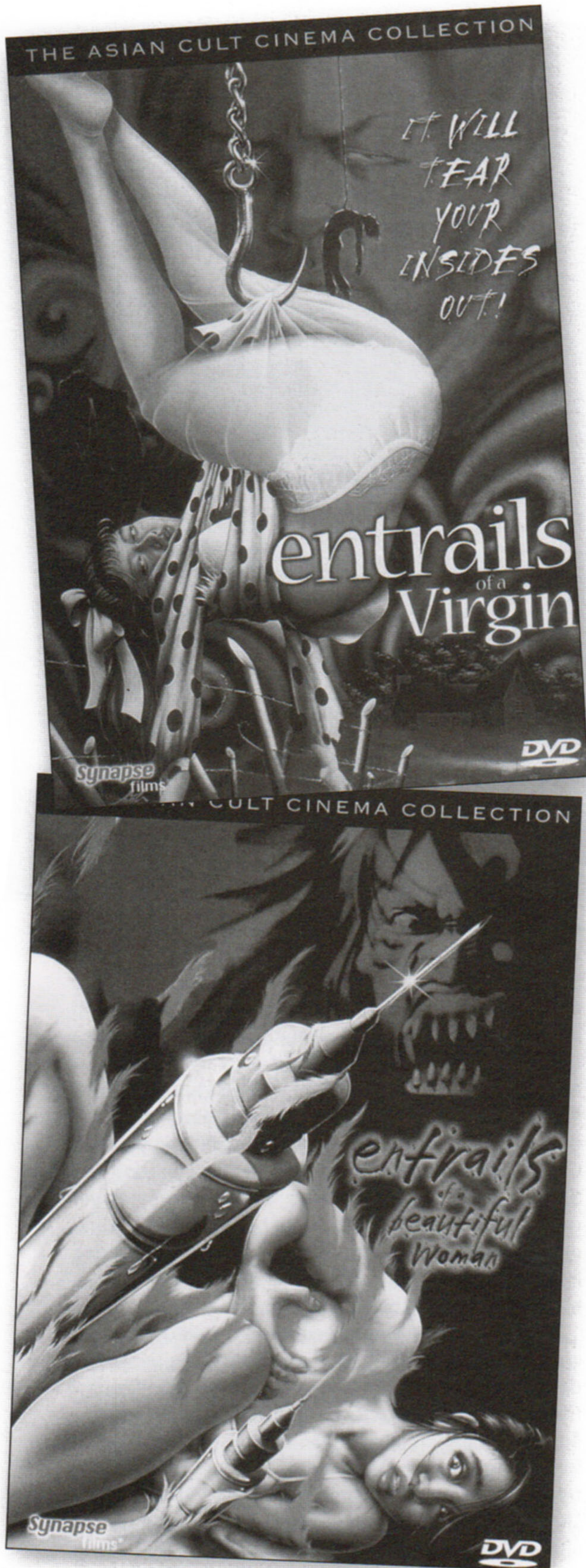


of associates, operates a successful sex video production company located in the middle of Shinjuku. Originally a pink director who switched to AV following a decline in the industry, Kayama has hit a rut in his life. Competition is hot in the world of the sex movie and along with the day-to-day pressures of running a tight ship in the face of diminishing financial returns, and the increasing demands of those who bankroll his productions, Kayama finds himself falling prey to a growing sense of familial obligation to his wife Chie and their young child Aki. After the discovery of an unfinished 8mm film made during his student days, he is struck once more with the urge to fulfil his early creative aspirations, hitting upon the idea of directing his own independent feature in order to drag himself out of his career cul-de-sac. With the intention of writing the script for his masterpiece, he heads down to Izu and hides himself away in the same quiet resort inn that links him and his wife to a more idealistic past, and a place where a movie adaptation of Yasunari Kawabata's story *The Izu Dancer* has just recently been filmed.

Focusing for the most part on the tedium behind the scenes of the AV industry, rather than its more alluring façade, Mochizuki's look at a man thrown into a midlife

career crisis is both heartfelt and sobering, though not without its elements of humour. The film was well-received at several festivals abroad, and led to a more permanent move for the director into mainstream movie-making, with his aforementioned yakuza movies. His overseas reputation reached critical mass with a retrospective at the Rotterdam International Film Festival in 1998. Even at this stage he'd never really left the sex film world behind him, and in 2000 he made *B-Grade Video Correspondence: AV Guy: Extraction Shop Ken*, distributed by Xces Film. After a few notable career misfires, it seems Mochizuki might have reached the end of this fruitful creative run. Recently, his name has faded from the lips of most critics and viewers, and it appears he has returned to the world of sex film production.

The spectre of AV loomed large over '80s pink and erotic feature film production, and ultimately led to the demise of Nikkatsu's Roman Porno range. Significantly, the company also reacted by targeting the AV market, firstly by assigning Masaru Konuma to shoot its first film for the new 'Roman X' range of low-budget hardcore titles shot on video, *Woman in a Box: Virgin Sacrifice* (1985). Boasting a scenario in which a perverted couple abduct a young girl and keep her hidden in their lair in



Tokyo's sewer system, imprisoning her in a large crate with only her head poking out, the production values were low, the sex clearly unsimulated and the film a genuinely unpleasant viewing experience. However, the use of different locations meant that the film was a little more ambitious than most AV works. *Ring* director Hideo Nakata later recalled his time as assistant director on the film with a surprising degree of nostalgia: in a lengthy unsimulated sex scene in a van with mirrored windows parked just outside of Shinjuku train station, through which passers-by can be seen blatantly staring at the vehicle, attracted by the light on the top of the camera as it rolled, his tasks included having to hold up a black piece of cloth to obscure the action, and ushering bemused pedestrians away.³¹¹ The film did lead to a better and bigger-budgeted sequel of sorts, shot and released on film and boasting a nicely-photographed ski resort setting and a slightly more satisfactory plot to it, though the main point *Woman in a Box 2* had in common with its predecessor was its title.

The other Roman X titles were not so ambitious. Most, if not all of them, were produced out of house by a company called Graphis and directed by Jin Nimura. His *Real Performance* series began with *Model Audition Edition* (1986), and continued with *Actress Audition Edition* (1987) which, in typical fashion, featured a sorry selection of candidates lining up for the casting couch as part an audition for lead actresses for an unmade film. The running time is made up of the bikini-clad wannabes responding to faked questions on stage, interspersed with candid footage shot in the changing rooms from beneath a glass floor and lengthy, more intimate, scenes with their 'producers'. The simple scenario of *OL Employment Test* (1987) is based around a job interview and medical examination for a number of ladies about to enter the stifled office world, where their co-workers freely peer up their skirts and secretaries regularly shake loose their hair and rip open their pristine white blouses to cater to the every desire of their male colleagues. Even more suspect was Nimura's *The Childbirth* (1986), which featured *Mondo*-style real delivery footage among the usual parade of perversions. Like *Woman in a Box*, all these films were released in heavily optically censored versions with the action permanently buried beneath digital mosaics. Nikkatsu had certainly fallen a long way since the inauguration of the Roman Porno line.

In general, the video market in Japan at the end of the '80s was out of control. Viewers weren't just being tempted by hardcore sex, but hardcore horror too. This was the era that produced the seven-film *Guinea Pig* video series (1985-92), inspired by the work of horror-manga author Hideshi Hino, with some of the films directed by Hino himself. Like AV, in its early episodes it attempted to pass off its catalogue of mutilations and disembowelments as the real thing, resulting in an infamous incident in which Hollywood star Charlie

Sheen, discovering one of the videos in a US import store, contacted the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) who in turn contacted the FBI. After a cursory formal examination, the action in the video was declared fake, but the notoriety of the series quickly spread among hardcore horror fans. In reality, only the first couple of episodes are pseudo-snuff; once Japan Home Video had acquired the name of the series, the films took a more conventional narrative tack.

Such cheap video horror plumbed depths that can be adequately described as pornographic, and with pornography edging towards the ever more horrific, Japanese cinema became notorious for its excesses. It was Gaira, the man behind the scenarios of the two *Women in a Box* films, who contributed the two most ridiculous titles to the field, *Entrails of a Beautiful Woman* and *Entrails of a Virgin*, both distributed by Nikkatsu in 1986. The films were inept porno-horror hybrids sporting lumbering fanged penis monsters and oodles of scenes of kinky sex, rape, gore and dismemberment, with the first featuring a violent yakuza gang rapists and the second set during an erotic photo shoot in a deserted country house.

Japanese cinema attendances reached an all-time low of 143,573,000 in 1989, a mere 13% of their peak in 1958 (the downward trend continued until 1996, in which only 119,575,000 attendances were registered, although there has been a gradual upswing from 1997 onwards).³¹² But viewers intent on getting their pleasures at home via these ever more transgressive cheapjack video offerings were about to get a rude wake-up call. In 1989 in Saitama Prefecture, a man named Tsutomu Miyazaki was discovered to have abducted and violently murdered four young girls, aged between four and seven, within a two year-period. More shockingly, he'd sexually abused their corpses and even eaten portions of several of them. The media panic was immediate, and its consequences far reaching, when it was reported that his extensive video collection contained a substantial amount of violent and pornographic films, including several of the *Guinea Pig* films. A mass nationwide clean-up of the kind of material alleged to have inspired him was undertaken, and countless titles were removed from the racks of video rental stores nationwide.

This shocking incident resulted in calls for the video industry put its house in order. The AV market persisted to some degree with delivering the harder material. The loathsome work of director Bakushishi Yamashita, whose *Female Violation (Johan)* series from the early '90s attempted to pass off lengthy simulated scenes of brutal gang rape as the real thing, understandably elicited the ire of feminist organisations, while the seven-part semi-comic straight-to-video series of *The Rapeman* (1993-1995) – from former TV drama director Takao Nagaishi and distributed by Pink Pineapple – while neither as raw nor as explicit, still proved



above: Nearing the end of the line for Nikkatsu: Gaira's notorious ero guro production *Entrails of a Beautiful Woman* (1986).

contentious enough to be singled out by foreign writers flabbergasted by Japan's seemingly blasé attitude to onscreen violence against women, and justifiably so.

But in the aftermath of the Miyazaki case, the pink film auspiciously began to tone down its rougher elements. Reacting to the demands of *seijin eiga* exhibitors, who were in turn reacting to the demands of their patrons, the pink production companies demanded their directors curbed their enthusiasm for mixing flesh and blood. The truth was that viewers were losing their appetites for strong scenes of torture and sexual violence, and as the '90s dawned, the rape and SM sub-genres became increasingly marginal, until they all but vanished.

The pink production companies desperately needed to take heed of audience tastes anyway. The cessation of Nikkatsu's Roman Porno range in 1988 had drastically reduced the number of potential exhibition spaces for their work, and throughout the '80s, many of the exhibitors, facing increasing costs and reduced box office returns, had stepped out of the market. To many it seemed that the collapse of the pink film industry was imminent. It was time for a fresh tack.

Footnotes

272 One can't help but think here of Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975), which boasted a similar set up, although the motive for making this film was clearly completely different, and certainly few would describe it as erotic.

273 Richie, Donald. *The Japanese Eroducton*.

274 Literally meaning 'senses novel'.

275 Bornhoff, Nicholas. *Pink Samurai: The Pursuit and Politics of Sex in Japan*. London: Grafton Books, 1991. pg 364.

276 *Kinbaku* is a verb meaning literally 'to bind tightly'. The practitioners of what has become a highly refined art form as known as *bakushi*, or 'bind masters'. The *baku* character of this word, when used on its own, can be read as the verb *shibaru*, meaning to bind, tie or truss, hence the alternative name for the bondage practice of *shibari*.

277 Interview by Hamamoto, Maki, in *Asian Cult Cinema* 19. pg 41.

278 *Naomi* actually received a US release. *Variety* reviewed it on 2 July, 1980.

279 Hamamoto, Maki. Ibid. pg 41.

280 The *Ryô* character can also be read as *Makoto* or *Yoshi*, while the two characters that comprise *Hida* could also be read as *Hita* or *Tobita*.

281 The JMDB also lists an alternative name for him of Saburô Kyôdô. The *kanji* is slightly different: the *ichi* from *Ichirô* means 'one', implying a family's first born son, while the *san* from Saburô means 'three'.

282 The Japanese title *Shokudô jingi* is a pun on *Gokudô jingi*, the moral code of honour among the yakuza.

283 Hamamoto, Maki. Ibid.

284 Interview by Thomas Weisser and Yuko Mihara Weisser in *Asian Cult Cinema* 22. pg 24.

285 The Japanese title is *Dan Oniroku kanshû: SM taisen-shû*. No director is credited.

286 Fentone, Steve. *AntiCristo: The Bible of Nasty Nun Sinema and Culture*. Surrey: FAB Press, 2000.

287 Several sources have mistranslated the writer's family name as Soto.

288 Ohara interviewed by Hamamoto, Maki in *Asian Cult Cinema* 22. pg 35.

289 Ibid.

290 Ibid.

291 The translated titles from Thomas Weisser's *The Sex Films* are the ones the films are best known under. The original titles used a number of different words for 'rape' or 'assault', like *okasu*, *bôkô*, *bôkan*, *osô* and the loan word *reipu*. Each has nuances in meaning and application that have other related meanings such as assault, violent attack, outrage. i.e. though not always used in this sense, most of the words imply sexual violence, and given the content of the films, the titles are apt.

292 If the series did indeed cause a revolution, it must have been a minor one, because compared with the films the books seem to be little remembered today. A Google search in Japanese using the titles mainly brings up references to the films, with very little mention of the manga. Checking Amazon Japan shows they are no longer in print, and also I have searched unsuccessfully for them in used book shops such as Book Off. The only time I have seen the manga was during an interview with Ishii for the Artsmagic DVD release of the films, in which the director brought one with him.

293 Interview with Ishii by the author on Artsmagic DVD release of the *Angel Guts* series.

294 Interview with Ikeda by the author on Artsmagic DVD release of the *Angel Guts* series.

295 *Inga* is not a real word, but made up for the film's title from the characters meaning 'lewd' and 'picture'. There is a homophone however, utilizing a different first character for 'in', referring to photographic prints. Given the film's scenario, one can assume this play on words was intentional, and 'porno' certainly is a satisfactory English-language conveyance of this meaning.

296 Interview with Ikeda. Ibid.

297 Argo Project was an affiliation of six companies, that continued to exist separately and were usually subcontracted for the productions under the Argo label. The key point about Argo was that they had theatres in Shinjuku and Osaka in which to show the films, thereby trying to break the majors' monopoly on the distribution/exhibition business. I am indebted to Alex Zahlten for this information.

298 This was the year when James Cameron's *Titanic* topped local grosses, and the anime *Princess Mononoke*, directed by Hayao Miyazaki, was the top-grossing Japanese film.

299 Mes, Tom, and Sharp, Jasper. *The Midnight Eye Guide to New Japanese Film*. Stone Bridge, 2005. pg 252.

300 Richie, Donald. *Japanese Cinema: An Introduction*. Oxford University Press. pg 81.

301 Kumashiro's film was a post-Roman Porno title, made under the new Ropponica label.

302 Matsuda also wrote the source story for Shinji Aoyama's body horror *EM: Embalming* (1999) under the penname Saki Amemiya.

303 Interviewed in *24th Pia Film Festival Catalogue*. pg 82.

304 Interviewed by author on Midnight Eye. www.midnighteye.com/interviews/ryuichi_hiroki.shtml. Updated 12/04/05.

305 The translation of *Sexual Abuse* given by Weisser, Thomas seems appropriate. The word *sekkon*, actually means 'Discipline' or 'chastisement', and is comprised of the characters *setsu*, 'to break, yield, bend or submit', and *kan*, 'jail, or cell'.

306 Midnight Eye interview. Ibid.

307 Ibid.

308 Kanai himself is a wildly interesting filmmaker. Mark Nornes describes him in his book on Shinsuke Ogawa, *Forest of Pressure* (pg 150) as "known for his wildly experimental films that also have a documentary touch." During the '60s he entered the cinematography department of Daiei studios, but went freelance in 1964. Outside of documentaries, he is known for his avant-garde films of the late '60s such as *Desert Island* (*Mujin retto*, 1969).

309 Schilling, Mark. *The Yakuza Movie Book: A Guide to Japanese Gangster Films* (Stone Bridge Press, 2003). pg 85-86.

310 Schilling. Ibid. pg 87.

311 Mes, Tom and Sharp, Jasper, *The Midnight Eye Guide to New Japanese Film*. pg 252.

312 Information from the Unijapan website. www.unijapan.org/

The Four Devils and the Pink Nouvelle Vague

By rights, the pink film should have been dead in the water by the '90s, as it struggled against the rapidly rising tide of its less sophisticated AV rival. Even those viewers potentially more predisposed to the large-screen works' technical virtues, and related aspects such as plot and performance – as opposed to the hardcore video's grubby insistence on sheer in-your-face explicitness – always had the burgeoning genre of glossy softcore V-cinema productions to turn to. There was no real necessity to venture into the shared public space of a porno theatre when such pleasures were so readily available on tap in the privacy of one's single-room apartment. For filmmakers, it consequently appeared that there was no real need to continue shooting and exhibiting such works on the high-cost medium of celluloid.

Yet, against all odds, the pink film not only continued to be produced in similarly large quantities to the previous decade (though the number of theatrically-released *seijin eiga* diminished after Nikkatsu ceased making Roman Porno – as too did total domestic movie production shrink as a whole – and thus the ratio of pink

films to mainstream releases actually grew),³¹³ in the process undergoing something of a renaissance. Shintohe president Kôichi Gotô reports that following the demise of Roman Porno, 1991-92 was the company's most profitable year (although he points out that this was also attributable to rising ticket prices across the whole Japanese film industry).³¹⁴ For the first time since the '60s, the field became the focus of a renewed critical evaluation and appreciation, as it found itself recognised as a crucial part of a blossoming Japanese independent filmmaking sector, and its works of interest to a potentially broader audience than its dwindling core of ageing theatre-lurkers more drawn by habit than what was actually playing onscreen.

All of this was marked by the emergence of a group of directors known as the *shitennô*, a label most commonly translated as the Four Devils, though the group has also been referred to as the Four Kings of Pink, the Four Heavenly Angels and the Four Heavenly Beings.³¹⁵ The filmmakers in question are Kazuhiro Sano, Hisayasu Satô, Toshiki Satô and Takahisa Zeze.



above: Takahisa Zeze's oblique *Dream of Garuda* (1994), one of the films seen as being that little bit too sophisticated by *pinku eiga*'s traditional viewers.
©Kokuei/Shintohe

Seemingly little links their work at first glance, and their styles and approaches to filmmaking are all markedly different. Toshiki Satô once drew a parallel with *ramen* chefs, referring to the huge phenomenon of soup noodles, in which what is essentially a junk food is elevated to the realms of *haute cuisine* as individual store owners strive for their own distinctive blend and balance of the soup stock's core ingredients. Ostensibly they all make the same kind of product – in this case erotic films – but with a flavour that is unique to the individual director.

One element they perhaps did share was that their films all self-consciously drew attention, though in very different ways, to the gulf between reality and its reconstructed representation on film – a cardinal sin for a genre in which the onscreen simulacrum of an overwhelmingly physical experience is passed off as a surrogate for the real thing. But the main reason their names became banded together was due to a combination of being in the same place at the same time, and a more calculated effort on the behalf of the production company Kokuei to pursue markets outside of pink's traditional network. While certainly not all of them can be considered as exclusively working for Kokuei at the time they were 'discovered' by critics, this company evidently played a key role in their hoisting to prominence.

What separated these four directors from the rest of the herd – either those working at other companies, or directors like Yukio Kitazawa and Shûji Kataoka who were also making films for Kokuei around this time – was their general stance towards the genre. Rather than just shooting one-hour program fillers to keep theatre schedules ticking over, each was thoroughly aware that they were indeed making real movies, shot on 35mm with technically-proficient crews, and that within this market they had the freedom to experiment with the form and the content of their works to their hearts' content, or near as, just as long as they stuck to the proviso that they provided the necessary number of sex scenes to keep regular patrons happy. Even then though, it appears that regular patrons often *were not* happy.

The inclusion of all of the Four Devils in books like Kinema Junpô's encyclopaedic *Illustrated Who's Who of*

Japanese Cinema: Directors and Best One Hundred and One Film Directors Japan Edition (a compendium edited by Saburô Kawamoto, containing biographies of a selection of directors considered most important to Japan's cinematic history) is indicative of the way in which they have been perceived in their homeland. Far more than simple purveyors of smut creating works that few people would deem worthy of looking at more critically, their breaking down of the barriers between art and exploitation lent them a certain degree of kudos, and ushered in a whole new era of interest in this hitherto virtually neglected filmmaking sector.

Whereas several of the filmmakers who cut their teeth in the industry during the eighties – figures like Masayuki Suô, Yojirô Takita, Rokurô Mochizuki and Ryûichi Hiroki – had used this environment to hone their craft and as a springboard into a more legitimate form of commercial filmmaking, the Four Devils have taken a more flexible approach that, to some extent, typifies the climate of the modern Japanese film industry, often returning to their early callings in *pinku eiga* after various forays into either arthouse, straight-to-video, cable, television or even major commercial movies.

As we shall see, with the complex re-organisation of the production and distribution systems of the domestic film industry during the '90s, the boundaries between mainstream, major studio and independent production methods began to blur sufficiently to become almost meaningless. 'Mainstream' implies mass-market commercial movies. 'Independent' usually corresponds with more artistic or progressive works aimed at more specialised audiences, and yet pink films are by definition independent productions. In order to avoid confusion, Japanese writers use the term *ippan eiga*, meaning 'general', 'normal' or 'universal' films to refer to pink directors' work for non-pink markets.

The four directors all made their first significant works in 1989, with the exception of Hisayasu Satô, who had been directing continuously since 1985 at Kan Mukai's production company Shishi Pro. Prior to making films at Kokuei, Takahisa Zeze had been an assistant director to Hisayasu Satô, with Kazuhiro Sano then serving as an actor who appeared in a number of Satô's films, and Toshiki Satô making a living as a freelance film staff member. The year 1989 was a significant one in several respects. In cinema it marked the landmark directorial debuts of Takeshi Kitano with *Violent Cop*, Shinya Tsukamoto with *Tetsuo: The Iron Man*, and Junji Sakamoto with *Knock-Out*, giving the domestic industry a much-needed shot in the arm. It saw the beginning of Toei's V Cinema (*bui shinema*) line of films made specifically for the video rental market, and also the launch of satellite TV, both of which had their own ramifications on *pinku eiga*.

On a more profound socio-political level, it also saw the death of the Shôwa Emperor Hirohito and the



above: A new vision of sex provided by Hisayasu Satô's *The Bedroom* (1992).
©Kokuei/Shintoho

accession to the throne of his son, Akihito. This ushered in a new era in the country's history, referred to by the Japanese system as the Heisei Period, meaning 'attainment of peace' (although ironically it was during the reign of Akihito that the government reneged on the anti-war clause of the Japanese constitution by sending 'Self-Defence' troops overseas to help out the Allies in the chaos following the Iraq invasion of 2003, provoking a wave of demonstrations: considerable internal debate had effectively prevented the country participating in the 1991 conflict, even though the government pledged billions of dollars in its support). The loss of this national figurehead, who had been on the throne since 1926, initiated a great deal of soul-searching among the citizenry of Japan, as well as concerns about where the country was heading and, among the more critical still mindful of Hirohito's dubious role in leading the country into the Pacific War, also where the country had come from – all of which came to be reflected in a number of films from the period.

Mammoth changes were also afoot in the sex film industry, which had lost a major force in the form of Nikkatsu the year before. As Zeze himself recalls: "This year was not a particularly good time for the pink film, because AV had so much power, and were using lots of cutesy 'idol'-style actresses, so for the films we made from '86-89 we had lots of requests to use these type of actresses. This year we felt that the pink film was very much in danger of extinction, so that was what made me think, if they're disappearing anyway, then we can get away with doing whatever we want."³¹⁶

This kind of thinking went profoundly against the grain of what theatre patrons expected from *seijin eiga*, and was another reason for the Four Devils being singled out for attention. Their collective grouping was essentially stigmatic. Their films often angered clients, and theatre owners were reluctant to book them. The arrival of the Four Devils might well have prompted a change in a more auteur-led direction for the production company Kokuei, but it should also be spelt out that while, to this day, Kokuei's films are seen as representing the current state of the pink industry overseas, back at home – and particularly in the areas outside of Tokyo – they are not as widely screened in pink theatres as those of rival companies.

What the Four Devils essentially did was exploit the cinematic and narrative possibilities of the sequences bridging the scenes of bare flesh and coitus, adding their own mix of politics, philosophising, meta-textual experimentation and social commentary to the mix – so much so that the sex scenes often seemed like an afterthought and the films could easily stand on their own merits if they were removed. In fact, their approach to the genre, ranging between the highly stylised and the disturbing to the downright ambivalent, often elicited



above: Kiyomi Itô under surveillance in *The Bedroom* (1992). ©Kokuei/Shintoho

the common criticism that the films were "'dark', 'too difficult to understand' and 'low on sex'."³¹⁷

Fortunately, among these generally unappreciative audiences were a number of young writers who were quick to spot that something very exciting was in motion, and their enthusiastic championing of this otherwise demonised quartet in specialist fanzines such as *PG* (then known as *NEW ZOOM-UP*) soon began to draw in a younger, more curious breed of viewer to pink venues.

It has often been suggested that the Four Devils re-introduced political and social issues to the pink genre in the same spirit of Kôji Wakamatsu and company during the '60s. Certainly, when you talk to the individual directors, it becomes clear that their interest in the genre was spurred by early encounters with Wakamatsu's films. As Hisayasu Satô said, "When I was a teenager we had big Hollywood movies like *Star Wars* and equivalent Japanese big-budget movies like *Japan Sinks*,³¹⁸ and I watched these films in the theatre and thought they were really uninteresting. They didn't do anything for me. Then I went to the smaller pink theatres and saw films by directors like Wakamatsu – and of course, this was already long after their initial releases, so I saw them on retrospectives – so I got to know of his work as a 15-year-old kid, putting on sunglasses and sneaking into the theatres pretending to be an adult, and I thought this was a really exciting experience. That's how I started watching these films. As I started watching them, I soon got the impression that there was a great deal of difference depending on who made them. So I got to understand that if you are a good director, there's a possibility to do some very exciting things within this format."³¹⁹

One should, however, make a distinction between works that allude to or reflect political situations (for example, the appearance of Red Army characters in Kazuhiro Sano's *Don't Let It Bring You Down*, or the 1990-91 Iraq war making its presence felt on the inhabitants of Tokyo by way of TV news reports playing in the background in Takahisa Zeze's *No Man's*



above: Scenes from a marriage: Hotaru Hazuki as the bored housewife at the centre of Toshiki Satô's *Apartment Wife: Midday Adultery* (1997). ©Kokuei/Shintoho

Land) and those which paraded their political colours more boldly. Wakamatsu's generation were firmly partisan in their politicking, in a manner that those filmmakers who came of age in the following decades never were. The days of regular student protests and revolutionary plots had effectively disappeared with the Asama Mountain Lodge Incident of 1972. As Satô continues, "It is true that in the age Wakamatsu started out, during the '60s, the political struggle and the political positions of the opposing sides was very clear cut. For those of my age, certainly when I was growing up, political issues became a lot more difficult to define and to detect, so for myself and my generation, it was very difficult to see what politics was all about, and there was a lot of insecurity in this respect."

In contrast, rather than using their cinema to jolt viewers into direct action, the Four Devils tended to turn a coldly detached and analytical eye on their subjects, observing their withdrawn, largely anonymous, characters from a more contemplative distance and emphasising the landscape that they inhabited. One only has to think of the dislocated, future-shocked loners reaching out desperately (and often violently) for human contact in Hisayasu Satô's bleak urban wastelands; Zeze's violent criminals who roam the margins in search of spiritual redemption; and Toshiki Satô's desperate housewives, keeping home for errant workaholic husbands, dreaming of transcending their unfulfilling lot in life. The work of the Four Devils might seem slippery, opaque and difficult to get a handle on for many viewers, but it is

best viewed in terms of presenting an overall vision, rather than any individual messages.

A second point is that the *shitennô* were never really a cohesive movement as such. While they all banded together to find a way of getting their work more widely shown, each was clearly working through their own thematic agendas. As Zeze acknowledges, "We didn't intend to make 'art films', but we were talking about heading in that direction. One thing for sure was that we were a group of people, so we were creating a movement. It's similar to Jean-Luc Godard and the directors of the French New Wave, or Masao Adachi and Kôji Wakamatsu with Wakamatsu Pro. We knew that we needed a few of us to make a movement."³²⁰

Certainly, the focus on young protagonists and the gritty portrayals of Tokyo's urban environment, at a time when the rapid escalation of the economy during the Bubble years had left many relegated to the social sidelines, provided a mirror for many viewers to see their hopes and fears reflected onscreen in a way that more mainstream productions seldom did. But in order to raise a more public awareness of the genre as a valid avenue to express a particular vision, it was necessary for the Four Devils to bring their works out of the self-contained world of the adult movie theatre to a wider audience, which is exactly what they conspired to do. Fortunately they had the backing of Daisuke Asakura, the president of their production company Kokuei, behind them. We will encounter this intriguing figure more closely in the following chapter,

but for now it is sufficient to say that Asakura has been an instrumental force behind both the national and international visibility of these directors, and others like them who followed.

The venue chosen to showcase the works of the Four Devils was Tokyo's Athenée Français Cultural Centre. This bastion of Tokyo's cinematic culture has a history in language instruction stretching back over 100 years. In 1970, the *Centre Culturel* was established, with the noble purpose of, "promoting international exchange through film."³²¹ With screenings of films from France and across the rest of the world backed up by courses in filmmaking from such creative heavyweights as Shûji Terayama, it soon developed into a vital hub for Tokyo's community of cinéphiles, culture vultures and budding young filmmakers.

In November 1993, a number of Takahisa Zeze's works were screened as the first of a series of special events held at this venue every three months, entitled Biographies of New Japanese Artists of Principle (*Shin nihon sakka shugi retsuden*). Intended to introduce a new generation of filmmakers emerging from radically different backgrounds, the screenings saw Zeze and the other pink directors joined by a young Naomi Kawase,³²² whose highly-personal 8mm diaries were screened,³²³ and Hiroyuki Ôki, a director of experimental shorts who later went on to make a couple of gay pink films, as well as one non-gay pink film for Kokuei, *Tears of Ecstasy* (1995). Sano was the subject of the second focus, in February 1994, and later the two remaining *shitenno*, further consolidating pink's role as a vibrant part of the Japanese indie scene.

Much of the significance of these Athenée Français events can be attributed to the time at which they

occurred. Vast changes in the industry were afoot in the early '90s. Throughout the previous decade the major studios had radically slimmed down their release rosters, and were mainly turning out unsophisticated anodyne crowd-pleasers that served to almost entirely alienate an entire generation of cinema-goers from the domestic produce. A career in commercial filmmaking appeared a closed shop for many aspiring new talents. One of the main strengths of the studio system had been its in-house training schemes, in which newcomers would serve an apprenticeship lasting, on average, ten years, before going on to direct their own films. During the late '70s, with the exception of Nikkatsu, the major studios stopped taking on apprentices, and thus by the early '90s the film industry was dominated by old studio lags, with the highly-competitive medium of television providing one of the few possible routes into a mainstream career.

While abandoned by all the other studios, this *senpai-kôhai* (senior-junior) mentorship system is still a central feature of the pink industry. Just as Hisayasu Satô learnt the ropes under Yojirô Takita, Takahisa Zeze served as a *jo-kantoku* (assistant director) under Hisayasu Satô, and Rei Sakamoto received his training under Zeze's wing. Due to the pink film's extremely quick production turnaround, the assistant director's job is an extremely tough and unsatisfying one, as many of latest breed of directors, like Shinji Imaoka, who succeeded Zeze to work under Hisayasu Satô, will testify. The assistant director is ultimately responsible should anything go wrong during the shoot, and only a few stalwarts make it through this harsh regime to make their own films. However, during the late '80s



above: A bleak picture of contemporary society as viewed through Hisayasu Satô's *TURTLE VISION* (1991). ©Kokuei/Shintocho

and early '90s, the path to the director's chair was also notably quicker than the one that had traditionally been provided by the major studios – one of the temptations of the genre cited by Zeze, who was helming his own projects within three years.

Meanwhile, outside of the world of pink, another grassroots revolution had been occurring over the course of the '80s, as a generation of newcomers began to take an alternative route into filmmaking outside of the commercial industry. This was to just go ahead and make films under their own steam, raising their own budgets and scaling down their productions to keep them within the limits of the resources available. The key figures in this movement were Sôgo Ishii, Kazuki Ômori, and, a little later, Shinya Tsukamoto. Ishii's *Panic in High School* (1977), a 16-minute 8mm cutting-edge venture in do-it-yourself filmmaking, made while he was still at university, was remade at Nikkatsu by Ishii and Yukihiro Sawada the following year. The remake's success spurred the young wunderkind into helming a run of titles including *Crazy Thunder Road* (1980), *Burst City* (1982); and the ATG-produced *Crazy Family* (1984), movies which exuded a brash punk sensibility in tune with the era's underground music scene. At the tail end of the decade, Shinya Tsukamoto's raw-edged cyberpunk classic *Tetsuo* also caused waves back at home after scoring a freak international success by winning Best Film at Rome's FantaFestival in 1989.

The '80s had also seen an incredible strengthening in support for completely independent filmmakers following the founding of the Pia Film Festival (PFF) in 1977. Born out of the same organisation as the prominent Tokyo listings magazine *Pia*, and originally dubbed the Off Theatre Film Festival, PFF's self-drafted mandate was, "the discovery and development of new talents in film" in the absence of any film festivals in Japan at the time. The main goal, then as much as now, was to provide an exhibition space for the thriving *jishu eiga* scene (or more fully, *jishu seisaku eiga*, meaning literally self- or autonomously-produced films) – homemade works shot on 8mm or 16mm, and later increasingly on video. The festival was totally independent, receiving no government funding, and was initially supported only by the magazine.³²⁴

Many of the directors currently plying their trade in Japan at one time benefited from the festival's patronage, including such major players as Yoshimitsu Morita, Shunichi Nagasaki, Jôji 'George' Iida and Kiyoshi Kurosawa. Central to PFF's support of the independent scene has been its scholarship scheme. Established in 1984, and granted to one director each year, it provides financing and theatrical distribution for its recipients, hopefully setting them off on a fruitful filmmaking career. The scheme really took off in the early '90s, with past winners including Ryôsuke Hashiguchi with *A Touch of Fever* (1993), Shinobu

Yaguchi with *Down the Drain* (1993), Kazuyoshi Kumakiri with *Hole in the Sky* (2001, starring the later Oscar nominee Rinko Kikuchi – then still known as Yuriko Kikuchi), Lee Sang-il with *Border Line* (2002), and Naoko Ogigami with *Yoshino's Barber Shop* (2003).

Before the rise of arthouse theatres and micro-cinemas throughout the capital during the '90s, getting one's work seen was as much a problem for an indie filmmaker as getting it made, with many of the majors controlling their own chain of theatres across the country, block-booking them with their own films to ensure a major part of the production costs are covered even before release³²⁵ (the problem of finding screens for independent works still persists outside of Tokyo and other major cities like Osaka). The Athenée Français provided one possible venue for an alternative film culture, as did Image Forum, an institute specialising in experimental film. Another vital organisation was Euro Space, which opened its own theatre in the early '80s, and became the frontrunner for the arthouse sector by exhibiting both foreign and domestic releases that wouldn't get screened elsewhere, later involving itself in production, not dissimilarly to the Art Theatre Guild during the previous decades.

But the Pia Film Festival played one of the most important roles in laying down the foundations for an alternative film culture that slowly rose to become the norm over the course of the '90s, attracting the same crowds of film enthusiasts and figures from the creative industries as the Athenée Français. There was no real connection between PFF and the pink world at the time of the showcasing of the *shitenno*'s works in 1994, although as we shall see, Kazuhiro Sano had originally been involved in the *jishu eiga* scene before becoming an actor in pink films. Nevertheless, the Biographies of New Japanese Artists of Principle event did serve to highlight another possible wellspring for the next generation of filmmaking talent. In 2002, the 24th Pia Film Festival recognised the potency of this alternative enclave when they devoted a special program to Kokuei's films, showcasing a number of works by the *shitenno* and several of the directors among their successors, known as the *shichifukujin*, or Seven Lucky Gods.

At the time, what was considered to be most remarkable was how these directors had managed to carve out a space for themselves within the wider film industry, to make exactly the kind of films they wanted without having to resort to financing their filmmaking ambitions themselves. The pink film's main strength was that it already had a pre-existing production and distribution system behind it, and what the directors lacked in mainstream exposure was balanced by what they gained in creative freedom.

But how independent was the pink film? Just as the '80s and '90s marked a period in which

independent filmmaking came to the fore, it also marked a time when the term ceased to have much in the way of meaning. As Aaron Gerow points out in the essay 'From Independence to Detachment in Recent Japanese Film'³²⁶ in the year 2000 the three major surviving studios (Toho, Toei and Shochiku) released a total of only 57 films through their distribution arms, against the 225 produced by 'independent' companies, and over half of these were not actually produced in-house, but by outside interests. In other words, 'independent production' can no longer be seen in oppositional terms to 'mainstream Japanese cinema', as it has historically been, for example, in America (though arguably less so now). It has now become the production norm in Japan, with many producers raising funding through complex brokering deals between a number of different companies who each put up their share of the budget in return for their slice of box office bookings, international distribution, and television and video pre-sales. All of these different agents are, at some time or other, going to play a part in the development of the project.

In relation to these blurred boundaries between mainstream and independent, though Gerow claims that pink films, "with a few exceptions, are hard to describe as artistically or politically independent,"³²⁷ it is important to remember that pink movies receive their funding completely from the one single company that produces them. In most cases, the same company goes on to exhibit the finished work through its own related theatrical network, although it must be stressed that the theatres don't belong to the production company; producers and exhibitors are usually tied by long-standing contractual relationships. While the very nature of pink films' target audiences to a large extent determines their content, in this respect they represent one of the purest forms of independent filmmaking in Japan (though again, the influence exerted by exhibitors on the production companies as to exactly what kind of films are popular should not be underestimated). Whether the companies choose to exploit this freedom is another matter. The larger, more successful producers, for example Okura Productions and Xces, are arguably just as conservative now in what they choose to produce as major studios like Toei or Toho were in their heyday. The case of Kokuei is slightly anomalous, in that its films are distributed by Shintocho, though except for a few isolated cases, the smaller company's more wayward stance hasn't really caused too many problems.

Zeze, who has gone on to shoot low-budget, so-called indie, productions such as *Hysteric* (2000) and *Dog Star* (2002), alternating them with ever more ambitious pink works like *Dirty Maria* (1998)³²⁸ and *Tokyo X Erotica* (2001), cites this very reason as being behind his ongoing return to his Kokuei roots: "You

have a great freedom of expression and the freedom to try new things. Another reason is that it allows me to make films with other people's money. When you make truly independent films you have to find financing and raise the money yourself. I'm not very good at collecting money. It's much easier for me to make the films I have in mind when I can use other people's money."³²⁹

In any measure, the screenings held in 1993 and 1994 at the Athenée Français, in the short term at least, can be judged to have been a success. For the next few years, pink suddenly found itself back in vogue. Listings magazines including *Pia* began to include pink theatre schedules in their pages, and many of Kokuei's films enjoyed screenings in arthouse venues such as Euro Space after they had completed their initial runs in their traditional networks, a pattern that still occurs to this day. Taking their work to new venues also brought Kokuei's films to a surprisingly appreciative new audience of women, a phenomenon that will be covered in the next chapter.

One notable development was that the films were now given separate titles for the different markets. Shintocho, who distribute Kokuei's work in pink cinemas, grace these works with monikers firmly in the pink tradition, comprised of coarse slang, vulgar innuendo and suggestive strings of eye-catching but often meaningless character combinations suggested by the more outré elements in the films. Meanwhile, as Kokuei retain the distribution rights for non-pink venues, festivals, special screening events and increasingly the broadband and satellite TV market, they present their films with the titles under which the directors and scriptwriters developed them.

According to Zeze, "If you have a very sleazy title, thinking about the finished film when you are sitting on the train or wherever is very difficult, so I try to give the film a working title that I like first."³³⁰ And thus his *Garden of No Men: Uniform Lesbian* is better remembered under the Dali-esque mouthful of *The Phenomenon Called Myself Is a Single Blue Illumination Within the Assumed Organic Interchanging Electric Lamp*, while *Molester Train: Mischievous Wives* is also known as *My Train Is Supposed To Be Going North But It's Going South* (both alternative titles are informed by the poems of one of Japan's best loved writers, Kenji Miyazawa). The naming issue is further complicated by the reissuing of old works under new titles, either by video distributors who buy the rights from Kokuei and are free to market them any way they choose, or by Shintocho, who sometimes pass them off as new works to make up the shortfall in hungry theatre schedules. Thus Hisayasu Satô's *TURTLE VISION* (1991) was originally released as *Hidden Camera Report: Sleazy Pictures*³³¹ and made it to video as *High-School Girls Next Door: Selling Themselves and Peeping*.



above: Toshiki Satô's *Molester Train Married Woman Edition: Wife Is a Pervert* (1994), better known under its director's title of *Tandem*. ©Kokuei/Shintoho

In 1995, the *shitenno* gained their first international exposure when their works – with the exception of Kazuhiro Sano's – were invited to the Rotterdam International Film Festival and the Vienna (Viennale) Film Festival (or at least, this was their first international exposure as a group: the Germans had already had some introduction to Hisayasu Satô's mad world, as he had already flexed his *Muscle* at the 1993 Berlin Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, while his *Fuga Music for Alpha and Beta* had played at the Oberhausen Short Film Festival in 1994). Tony Rayns wrote the article "Japan: Sex and Beyond" in the June 1995 issue of *Sight and Sound*, in which he introduced his subject with the claim that, "Japan is the only country in which the sex-film industry has attracted not only aspiring directors but also left-wing radicals, anarchists and avant-gardists." With the company Stance playing an active promotional role in making the films available for overseas sales, a number of the Four Devils' works were subsequently issued on video in English-subbed versions by the company Screen Edge. These were soon picked up upon by foreign writers, especially on the internet, prompting a host of articles by bemused academics and fan writers alike not privy to the inside world of Japanese softcore pornography. The pink film had again seeped out into the wider world.

So was it all just a lot of hot air, or was there something more substantial behind the resurgence? For those approaching the films expecting great works of art, one should bear in mind that these are, after all, small films, representing a harsh compromise between creative vision, budgetary constraints and audience demands. One probably couldn't put it any better than Toshiki Satô: "I've always held an alternative viewpoint. If you look at the film industry as a main road, then our films are something you would find down a side street or in an alleyway."³³² It is time for us to take a peer down this dark alley...

Footnotes

- ³¹³ Looking at the Eiga Nenkan industry records from 1986 and 1991; from July 1984 to June 1986, 333 Japanese films were released, 183 (54%) of which were pink *seijin eiga*. In the same 1989/90 period, out of 255 films, 155 (60%) were categorized as *seijin eiga*. I thank Alex Zahlten for drawing my attention to this information.
- ³¹⁴ Interview with author.
- ³¹⁵ It is not clear how the filmmakers came to be known in English language sources as The Four Devils, but all of the directors are aware of this foreign mistranslation and seem quite happy, indeed proud of it. The name is actually taken from Buddhist legend and refers to the four guardian deities who protect the world from evil: the *kanji* literally translates as Four Heavenly Kings. It also should be pointed out that in some Japanese sources it has been written incorrectly using the *tenno* characters used for the Imperial Emperor, giving a radically different implied meaning.
- ³¹⁶ Interviewed by author on Midnight Eye. www.midnighteye.com/interviews/takahisa_zeze.shtml. Updated 23/04/03.
- ³¹⁷ Fukuma, Kenji. "Mavericks of the Mavericks: The Four Devils of Pink Films," from *The Age of Independents* festival catalogue published by Hong Kong International Film Festival, 2002.
- ³¹⁸ Better known as *The Submersion of Japan*, this was a Toho disaster movie based on the bestseller *Nippon Chinbotsu* written by Sakyô Komatsu. The original version was directed by Shirô Moritani and released in 1973 (a US version also exists, with extra footage featuring Lorne Greene). The remake in 2006 was directed by Shinji Higuchi.
- ³¹⁹ "Sex and Politics in Japanese Film" podium discussion chaired by Roland Domenig and involving Kôji Wakamatsu, Hisayasu Satô, Yûji Tajiri and Prof. Mark Nornes of the University of Michigan held at the Nippon Connection festival in Frankfurt, 23 April, 2006.
- ³²⁰ Midnight Eye interview with Zeze. Ibid.
- ³²¹ See the Athenée Français's website: www.athenee.net/cultural-center/schedule/aboutus.html.
- ³²² Naomi Kawase became a prominent figure on the European festival circuit at the turn of the millennium after winning the Camera d'Or prize for new directors at Cannes for her impressionistic *Suzaku* in 1997, and the Grand Prix in 2007 at the same festival for her fourth full-length feature *The Mourning Forest* (*Mogari no mori*). See Mes, Tom and Sharp, Jasper, *The Midnight Eye Guide to New Japanese Film*. pg 228-239.
- ³²³ According to Roland Domenig, private notes, Zeze himself suggested screening Kawase's films, as he had encountered them in Kyoto where he was a student.
- ³²⁴ Nowadays it is run by a joint organisation of six companies known as PFF Partners, which is comprised of Pia Corporation, TBS, Tokyo FM, Imagica, Humax Cinema and Avex Entertainment.
- ³²⁵ See Schilling, Mark. *Contemporary Japanese Film*. New York: Weatherhill, 1999. pg 17.
- ³²⁶ Gerow, Aaron. "From Independence to Detachment in Recent Japanese Film," from *The Age of Independents* festival catalogue published by Hong Kong International Film Festival, 2002.
- ³²⁷ Ibid.
- ³²⁸ The *kegareta* of the title actually means 'dirtied' or 'defiled', whereas the *kanji onna*, for 'woman' is actually used, though the pronunciation as 'Maria' is written in the accompanying furigana.
- ³²⁹ Midnight Eye interview with Zeze.
- ³³⁰ Ibid.
- ³³¹ As spelt in this title, *insha* (translated here as 'sleazy pictures') is not a real word. The 'in' of *insha* expresses the meaning of 'shadow', 'secret', and 'negative', and is the 'yin' against the sunny, positive 'yang' – used for example with an alternative pronunciation as the first character in the title of Yôjirô Takita's *The Ying-Yang Master* (*Onmyôji*, 2001). As well as being used in one of the words for a photographic print, *inga* (literally, 'negative picture'), it has a sexual connotation in words like *inbu*, meaning 'private parts'. It is not written the same as another character pronounced *in* frequently employed in pink film titles, meaning 'lewd' or 'lascivious'. The example of this title should give a good idea of the complexities of translating between Japanese and English.
- ³³² Interviewed for the *Japanorama* series, first broadcast June 2002.

生まれる前の時間と死んだ後の時間って、どっちが長いと思う？



トーキョー エロティカ

瀬々敬久 監督作品

P-1 GRAND-PRIX 2001 チャンピオン作品

2002年ロッテルダム国際映画祭 正式招待作品

2002年香港映画祭 正式招待作品

2001年映画芸術日本映画ベストテン8位

出演:佐々木ユメカ / 佐々木麻由子 えり 奈賀穂子 / 石川裕一 伊藤猛 佐藤幹雄 川瀬陽太
下元史朗 佐野和宏

企画:朝倉大介 プロデューサー:衣川仲人 森田一人 増子恭一 撮影:齊藤幸一 音楽:安川午朗

編集:酒井正次 録音:中島秀一 助監督:坂本礼 脚本・監督:瀬々敬久

製作・配給:新東宝・国映/製作協力:Vシアター

カラー/ビスタサイズ/1時間17分/2001年

R-18

18歳未満の方は、ご覧になれません。



Yumeka Sasaki meets an old school flame in Toshiki Satô's
Woman of the House: Going to the Class Reunion (2004)
©Kokuei/Shintoho

The Devils Themselves...

The Four Devils are often cited as having radically altered the course of pink film history. In the previous chapter we saw how they opened up renewed critical discussions around the genre. However, though a fair degree has been written in Japanese about these directors and the environment in which they worked (see for example the 1996 publication *Pink Nouvelle Vague: The Challenge of Hisayasu Satô, Kazuhiro Sano, Toshiki Satô, Takahisa Zeze*, by Kenji Fukuma), in the English language there has been little critical evaluation of the individual directors and their work.

The substantial filmographies of each of these distinctive personalities makes it tricky trying to isolate the various elements that have made their films stand out from one another's, and from other pink filmmakers working at the same time, or to chart their creative evolution over the years that they were active in the business. There are considerable differences between the four directors however, each of whom could (and should) warrant a far more in-depth investigation. Given the limitations of space and the patchy availability of their individual works, the following overviews can only really serve as a starting point that I hope will inspire further research and a deeper interest in, and scrutiny of, their works, both in *pinku eiga* and outside it. So without any further ado, let's meet the Four Devils...

Troubled Identities: Kazuhiro Sano

Born in Shizuoka Prefecture in 1956, as well as being the oldest of the Four Devils, Kazuhiro Sano is, somewhat unjustifiably, the least familiar to foreign viewers.³³³ Part of this may be attributable to the comparatively small body of films to actually bear his name on the credits as a director, which amounts to only fifteen pink titles and two earlier self-made productions – a tiny total when compared to the work of many old hands in the industry, whose filmographies stretch into the hundreds, and the least number out of the four directors.³³⁴ Furthermore, there was Sano's absence from the overseas retrospectives in the mid-'90s, when interest in the Four Devils was at fever pitch, for various reasons that allegedly had more to do with him personally than the quality of his films, hence the subsequent dearth of releases for the overseas home viewing market. He is also the only one not to have used the pink industry as a launch pad into more conventional filmmaking projects. While Zeze and the two Satôs have moved on to push their work in new directions both inside and outside of erotic cinema, Sano has directed nothing since his final film for Kokuei, *Owl's Summer*, released way back in 1997.

But the final key to Sano's outsider status may found in his background, prior to his pink film debut in 1989 with *Last Bullet*. While others in the industry spent years toiling behind the scenes in the unglamorous roles of runners and assistant directors, Sano rose to prominence in front of the camera, initially appearing in the energetic 8mm or 16mm experimental works of several key figures in the *jishu eiga* scene in the late '70s and early '80s, before later moving into the pink industry.

And so, though Sano might be best known as the pink actor who shifted to the other side of the camera

to become a director (which in itself is hardly unique, being a path shared by others such as Tarô Araki, Yutaka Ikejima and Yumi Yoshiyuki, to name but three), it is this earlier work in *jishu eiga* that separates him from the others. His 80-minute self-penned and self-produced 8mm directorial debut, *An Ode to the Earthworm*, screened at the Pia Film Festival in 1982, and even travelled as far as the 1985 Edinburgh Film Festival, making him, ironically, the first of the four to have had his work screened overseas, by almost a decade. He followed it up in 1986 with another 8mm feature entitled *Dry Flower*. Understanding this underground milieu from which he emerged is an important factor in getting to grips with his filmmaking style and stance.

Nihon University represented something of a hotbed for the blossoming *jishu eiga* scene during the late '70s, just as it has done during the era when Masao Adachi was a member of the *Nichidai eiken* student filmmaking group. Though Sano studied at Tokyo's Meiji University, he became involved in the small entourage of budding moviemakers that included the names Yoshihiko Matsui and Ryûji Ôya³³⁵ who flocked together around its most illustrious alumnus, Sôgo Ishii, as part of a collective named Kyôeisha.³³⁶ Already something of a name in filmmaking circles, Ishii never actually graduated from Nihon University in the end, but nevertheless, this was the environment from which he launched his subsequent career. Sano's involvement with this group led to early appearances in Ishii's 35mm debut, the raucous bike gang movie *Crazy Thunder Road* (1980), and its follow-up homage to the local punk scene, *Burst City* (1982). But it is with Yoshihiko Matsui that his own work seems to manifest the most kinship. All but forgotten by today's viewers, Matsui is a figure ripe for rediscovery.

A member of Shûji Terayama's radical Tenjô Sajiki theatrical troupe during the '80s (in common with pink actor-director Yutaka Ikejima, and Kaizô Hayashi, a filmmaker best known for more commercial fare such as *Zipang* and his 'Mike Hama' film noir pastiches of the '90s), his down and dirty underground works from the '80s were highly regarded in their day.

Matsui made his directorial debut with the same film in which Sano first acted, *Rusty Empty Can*, a 59-minute 8mm work which played at the 1979 Pia Film Festival, and on which Ishii served as cameraman. According to the PFF website, it features three homosexuals as its main characters and boasts a shocking finale described as being not dissimilar to the Sada Abe incident. Sano played a smaller role in Matsui's even more inflammatory follow-up, *Pig Chicken Suicide* (1981), which told of the thwarted relationship between two *zainichi* (Koreans resident in Japan), one of whom works in an abattoir. In the same year, Matsui returned the favour by playing a small part in Sano's 8mm debut, *An Ode to the Earthworm*.

But it is Matsui's third film, *Noisy Requiem* (1988), that is considered to be his magnum opus, profiting from a *tour-de-force* performance by Sano as a downtrodden sewage worker who progresses from battering pigeons in the park with a claw-hammer before moving on to what he considers a more insidious form of human vermin. On the lowest rung in the pecking order, his vocal railings against disabled war veterans and Korean immigrant workers are revealed as mere empty spleen as it is soon insinuated that his own bloodline might itself have its origins on the Asian mainland.³³⁷ Featuring a grotesque parade of derelicts, deviants, midgets and misfits, this 150-minute-long epic, shot on handheld 16mm monochrome and set in some of the dingiest ghettos of Osaka, represented something of a monument to the excesses of the '80s underground scene. A labour of love that took five years to complete, it was Matsui's last film for over 20 years, until *Where Are We Going?* (2008), a love story between a gay man and a transsexual, in which Sano also played.

Sano's roots in *jishu eiga* are fairly unique for a pink director, but many of the elements contained within the films he made alongside his university associates have found themselves carried over into his later work. On a

thematic and political level, there's a tangible sense of shared vision with Matsui, with their focus on an underclass forgotten or left deliberately behind during Japan's miraculous post-war economic rise, their subversive and downright ambiguous treatment of issues of sexual and national identity, and their punkish and gleefully irreverent pokes at the Shôwa Emperor's position as the national *pater familias* (*Pig Chicken Suicide* culminates with a scene of a girl masturbating whilst listening to the famous wartime surrender speech).

In terms of style, Sano's pink films regularly wear their hand-made credentials on their sleeves, carrying over from his first independent works the stylistic tics of having the credits appear on hand-typed cards, labels stuck on walls and windows, or scrawled on scraps of paper, and with 8mm footage spliced into the main body of the film. Sano seems to be making a conscious effort to blur the boundaries between cinema as fictional narrative and cinema as recorded actuality, even to the point of using home-movie footage of his own children playing baseball, in *Don't Let It Bring You Down*, as part of the lead character's nostalgic flashbacks (they both appear in the credits under their real-life names of Ryôma and Gensuke, the same given to their fictional counterparts).

Related to this, and what most obviously characterises Sano's directorial work, both in the *jishu eiga* and pink fields, is his predilection for casting himself in the lead roles. With the director also claiming sole credit for all his scripts, his films are the most personal and confessional the genre has to offer, with the dividing line between Sano the man and Sano the director kept deliberately vague – a sort of *pinku eiga* counterpart to American directors like Vincent Gallo or Woody Allen. This, alongside the consistent casting of actress Kanako Kishi as his favoured onscreen sex partner (though he was married during the time he made these films), makes it difficult to see where the performance starts and ends.

Sano's films are not only concerned with emphasising the fragile boundaries between fantasy and reality by use of such Brechtian (or rather Godardian) conceits as breaking up scenes with textual intertitles and laying the bare bones of his films open for all to see; by self-consciously foregrounding the director's role as the solitary *auteur*, he is essentially positing his art as an extension of his personality. It might seem wilfully perverse then that Sano so vociferously denies any interest in being regarded as a *sakka* (the 'author' or *auteur* of his work),³³⁸ but judging by his various onscreen guises alone, it would seem that this particular director is an incredibly complex character. While he dominates the screen with his considerable acting talents, few of the parts he plays are glamorous, and derive much of their power from his enigmatic embodiment of a number of seemingly irreconcilable dichotomies; the simultaneous interplay between vanity and vulnerability, exaggerated machismo and social impotence.



above: On the scrapheap: Kazuhiro Sano stars in his directing debut, the 8mm *An Ode to the Earthworm* (1982). ©Kazuhiro Sano

This can be traced right back to his *jishu eiga* debut *An Ode to the Earthworm*, in which Sano played a sullen recluse who, in an early scene, is subjected to a violent homosexual rape in a public toilet. When he acquires a handgun, his personality changes dramatically, along with his appearance, as he shears off his greasy locks and dons shades and a trench coat before going in search of revenge. After shooting his assailants, he later assaults his neighbour (in a relentlessly brutal scene more intended to show the character's desperation than staged for erotic intent), who has been making his life misery by playing Beethoven records at full volume through his cramped apartment's paper-thin walls.

One can't help but draw comparisons between Sano's transformation from underdog to top dog with that of two similar films produced in America during the late-'70s – Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976) and, even more fittingly, Abel Ferrara's *The Driller Killer* (1979). *An Ode to the Earthworm* exudes the same gritty charge and gloomy atmosphere of urban paranoia as Ferrara's film (seldom has Tokyo looked so despondent), and just as Ferrara's tooled-up antihero manages to overcome his social impotence through the acquisition of a power drill, so too here is the pistol-phallus corollary rendered explicit. The coincidences don't stop there, as Ferrara also took the leading role in his film (under the pseudonym of Jimmy Laine), but in contrast, though Ferrara's raw independent feature marked the turning point between the hardcore porn of his first feature, *Nine Lives of a Wet Pussy* (1976), and a subsequently more distinguished career in arthouse cinema, Sano's inaugural piece preceded his plunge into the sex film industry.

Sano's introduction to pink film came via Kôji Wakamatsu's former associate Kazuo 'Gaira' Komizu, who played a small role in *An Ode to the Earthworm*. His first pink appearance was in Mamoru Watanabe's *Pervert Sex: I Melt* (1980), and throughout the decade he continued to appear in several of this director's films, as well as those of Gaira, like *Abnormal Naked Rape* (1982). But the most frequent director to put Sano's talents to good service was Hisayasu Satô, in whose delirious fantasies he often played, usually opposite Kiyomi Itô. He put in a number of brooding performances in Satô's films, including that of the lugubrious IT professional with a proclivity for violent, kinky sex and a terminal death drive in *Survey Map of a Paradise Lost* (1988), and the sadistic psychiatrist who routinely submits his wife to his multitudinous sexual peccadilloes in *Fuga Music for Alpha and Beta* (1989). Despite putting in the odd performance in works like *Cyclops* (1987), a straight-to-video sci-fi/horror hybrid directed by Jôji Iida,³³⁹ by the end of the decade Sano was well ensconced within the pink film world, a milieu which at the very least offered him a steady line of acting roles and, more importantly, the chance to make films without the strain of having to put up the budget himself.

The first pink title Sano directed was *Last Bullet* (1989). Though allegedly based on a short story by Jean-

Paul Sartre, it covered very similar trajectory to his 8mm debut. The plot is a simple one, concerning a small-town foundry worker obsessed with guns. His workaday life is marked by frustration and a withdrawal from reality, as he returns home nightly to a bare apartment decorated with model pistols. One night, however, rather than join his two colleagues in blowing their pay packets on a night of drunken debauchery, he acquires a real handgun from a yakuza source. The ensuing first half of the film cuts between scenes of his two colleagues enjoying the company of a bar hostess, and Sano using his newly found power in a lengthy scene of him abusing a prostitute, forcing her to fellate him at gunpoint.

During these scenes, a third character is introduced, played by Kanako Kishi, who is first seen making love to an older man with a moustache whom it is revealed is her department head at work. Living alone in the same apartment block as Sano, Kishi's character is frequently plagued by unsolicited spurts of heavy-breathing down the phone. When Sano approaches her after months of distant admiration, she initially assumes that he is the caller and rebuffs his quaint romantic overture of a bunch of flowers. Bursting into her apartment, he unleashes a mass of pent-up rage, and forces her to the floor. Then the phone rings, clearing him from suspicion, and she (quite inexplicably) succumbs to his yearnings. But when he returns later, he discovers her boss at her apartment, and fires his loaded pistol at him. In the closing moments, he flees from the building and turns the gun on himself.

Last Bullet is more dramatically staged than most pink films, and makes good use of the director's captivating screen presence to confront myths about masculinity. For all that, the film is ultimately about male, rather than female, sexuality, with its women characters reduced to the standard ciphers of either saviours or whores. The homoerotic subtext is overtly spelt out in the scenes of Sano's two work colleagues' rough sex play after taking the bar hostess home. Here her denuded body acts purely as an intermediary for the same-sex interplay between the two lads on the town, and the feigned moans of pleasure are intercut to form a marked contrast to the genuine vocal expressions of affection as Sano first consummates his passion with Kishi.

Exaggerated masculinity often walks hand-in-hand with downright sexual ambivalence in Sano's films, both as a director (*Don't Let It Bring You Down* features one sex scene between a gangster and his moll which disconcertingly changes tone in the middle when it becomes clear that the 'lady' is in fact the actor Kôichi Imaizumi in drag) and in his performances; Sano has starred in many a gay pink film. Many of his standard pink works, too, seem more like celebrations of male relationships, with the woman mainly performing as a fleshy intermediary. Appearing as one of the lecherous work colleagues in *Last Bullet* is Tarô Araki, who at the time was also serving as an assistant director at Kokuei – though he later became a director in his own right for Ôkura Eiga.

The diminutive, bespectacled Araki was cast in the role of Sano's nerdy but adoring sidekick in many films to portray a love triangle in which Kishi often seemed strangely irrelevant. In *Destroy Everything Ugly* (1990) – in which the two males play small-time crooks who come up against the yakuza – there's a scene in which Araki masturbates while spying on Sano and his lover Kishi making love. After completing his part in the act, Sano rolls over and goes to sleep, and Araki enters the room and asks Kishi if he can kiss her. When she complies, it is Sano whom Araki imagines he is kissing. In another scene, a drunken Sano attempts to arouse himself whilst watching Kishi masturbate, and has just crawled on top of her before a surfeit of alcohol forces him to give up and hang his head over the toilet bowl.

There's an equal ambivalence to the issue of 'Japanese-ness'. Sano's characters are often situated 'in' Japan, but not part 'of' Japan. *Under the Carp Banner* (1992) brings the concerns with race, national identity and the ruptures in the notional heterogeneity of modern Japan contained within Matsui's *Noisy Requiem* from the Shôwa to the Heisei Era. It sees two jaded US rock'n'roll-loving, KFC-binging Tokyo-dwellers, Kunio (Sano) and Rikako (Kishi), stealing an SUV and heading out from the big city to the remote rural village where Rikako's elder sister Tomoko and her husband run a small hot-spring resort. The narrative immediately establishes a conflict between the ancient and the modern. Tomoko is garbed in the habitual kimono, her face painted a grotesque and sickly white in the geisha fashion, while the husband speaks in aphasic croaks that Tomoko describes as the language of the *kappa*, mythical beasts that live in rivers, with the body of a turtle and a saucer-shaped indentation in their apelike

heads that contains their life spirit (the film makes reference to the writer Ryûnosuke Akutagawa's 1927 novella *Kappa*, which took the form of an account given by a lunatic asylum inmate about his travels in the land of these creatures of folklore). The couple eventually return to the city, bringing with them Rikako's nephew Koitarô (Araki), left simple-minded after tumbling from a rooftop at the age of five. Their attempts to open his eyes to a wider world outside of his parochial surroundings end tragically, as Koitarô is left in a confused whirl after his arrival in Tokyo's maelstrom of neon and noise, and finds himself party to a drug-fuelled orgy in Rikako and Kunio's apartment.

Under the Carp Banner is ultimately about culture clash, and one that unfolds within the country's own boundaries. Koitarô's very name suggests a link with older traditions; it is written using the character for 'carp', and early on in the film Rikako reveals that he was born on 5 May, the national holiday of *Kodomo no Hi*, in which the *koinobori*, or carp banner, is traditionally flown in honour of the male children of the household. In contrast, Rikako and Kunio (whose name contains the character *kuni*, for country, or nation) represent Japan's contemporary face. Hedonistic metropolitans besotted with foreign fashion, music and lifestyles, they arrive like aliens in the provincial resort village, immediately courting the attraction of a couple of bored small-town hicks who get their kicks spying on their soapy antics in the en suite *onsen* bathroom ("Tokyo people are so lucky... All we got here are gramps and grannies," they commiserate.) The pink release title of *Molester Obscene Peeping* is an indication of what a large part voyeurism plays in the proceedings, and indeed, it is a feature of many of Sano's films.



above: Kazuhiro Sano and Kanako Kishi, together for the first time in *Last Bullet* (1989).
©Kokuei/Shintoho

Further complicating the conflict is a third character, also played by Sano, of an anonymous tramp who shuffles around the village. His inability to communicate with the locals hints that he is of foreign origin, though from where is never made clear. However, he provides an adequate means for the local lads to vent their frustrations by way of violent beatings and verbal abuse, and for another couple of sensation-seeking tourists to spice up their sex lives: at one point when he is addressed the dialogue is censored with a bleep, possibly to mask the word *oshi* (deaf-mute).³⁴⁰

Released during the time of the first Iraq war, when the government and media were in tumult over plans to waive the national constitution's famous anti-war clause by sending Self-Defence Force troops overseas as part of the UN peace-keeping force (which is eventually what occurred in the aftermath of the second Iraq War in 2003), *Under the Carp Banner* presents a pretty scathing critique of modern Japan, its ignorance of the outside world, and its confused, fragmented sense of national identity. The film ends in chaos and destruction, with Koitarô's idiot savant exclaiming, "I'm going to re-build Japan, this rotten society."

The pervasive American influence from the Japan occupation onwards has obviously had a marked effect on the Japanese psyche, but Sano is clear in his distinction between politics and pop culture, and the Western influence on his own narratives are celebrated rather than denied. The fundamentals of *Destroy the Evil* (1990) owe much to John Schlesinger's *Midnight Cowboy* (1969); *Yokohama Long Goodbye* (1991) took the form of a hardboiled detective story inspired by the writings of Raymond Chandler and Ross Macdonald; *The Woman*

Who Clings (aka *Molester Masturbation Peeping*, 1992) was loosely based on Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Sano also fills his movies with American, or American-inspired, music, and the titles *Break on Through* (1995) and *Don't Let It Bring You Down* (1993) are taken from songs by The Doors and Neil Young respectively.

It is *Don't Let It Bring You Down* that best represents the conflation of all the aforementioned elements of his work, with Sano's wearied former Self Defence Force pilot on the run with wife Minako (Kishi) through a savagely cold and forbidding mountain landscape, having stolen important official documents. En route they join forces with a young *jishu eiga* filmmaker who travels from town to town in a white van containing a projector with which to screen his work. As they attempt to communicate with Kishi's father and younger sister, Eriko, who live in a nearby mountain village, it is Eriko's attempts at throwing their pursuers off the scent when she realises her phone is tapped that provide the rationale behind the film's pink title of *Pervert Telephone Masturbation*. With its road-movie structure, tragic dramatic trajectory and the poignant background of its main protagonists' violent wrench from their two sons, *Don't Let It Bring You Down* can be considered Sano's *chef d'oeuvre*, and something of a landmark in the '90s pink film.

Though Sano has directed nothing since *Owl's Summer* in 1997, he has not been absent from the *pinku eiga* scene. While busying himself behind-the-scenes uncredited, and appearing in numerous works by directors such as Takahisa Zeze, Toshiki Satô, Mitsuru Meike and Yûji Tajiri, he has been talking of making a comeback for several years now. We await his return with bated breath.

Reflections on a Gaze: Hisayasu Satô

Of all the Four Devils, none other possesses as diabolical a reputation as Hisayasu Satô. His dark and brutal fantasies are often seen as typifying all the excesses of Japanese exploitation cinema of the '80s and '90s, as well as yielding some of its most distinctive and repellent images. Who could ever forget the stomach-churning scenes in *Naked Blood*, of the sensual gourmand who, under the influence of "the ultimate painkiller" that transforms all feelings of bodily discomfort into pleasurable sensations, embarks on a self-cannibalistic feeding frenzy, gorily plucking her eye from its socket with a knife and fork before moving on with relish to gorge on her nether regions? Or the nightmarish spectacle in *The Secret Garden* (originally released to pink theatres in 1987 under the notorious title of *Lolita Vibrator Torture*) of borderline pubescent schoolgirls being sprayed with red, white, blue and yellow paint and smeared with shaving foam in the

cramped and dingy hideaway of a perverted loner whose walls are kept adorned with the blown-up monochrome photos of the screaming faces of his past victims, all the while set to the pervasive buzz of the titular torture instrument, in a film that does for marital aids what Tobe Hooper did for the chainsaw? Or the sophisticated spiralling mirror arrangements that feature in *Fuga Music for Alpha and Beta* (1989), distorting, rotating and replicating kaleidoscopically the images of its lead actress's body dangling above a bathtub of icy cold water, enveloped in polythene and bound in studded leather straps, while being menaced by her scalpel-wielding, white-coated psychologist husband as part of some ludicrous experiment?

Rape, sadomasochism, fetishism and aberrant sexuality abound in Hisayasu Satô's pink films, as is reflected in their original release titles. The eponymous *Wife Collector* (1985; the director's title is *Rotten Town*) is

a predatory taxi driver who knocks out his female passengers with an anaesthetic gas piped into the back of his cab before taking them back to his bare apartment to video himself molesting them. *Poaching by the Water's Edge*, released originally under the more descriptive title of *Horse and Woman and Dog* (1990), features a Sadean dominatrix who trawls the local beach for young women to bring back to her seaside villa and, with the aid of her two burly henchmen, forces them to partake in outrageous acts of bestiality. As if this weren't enough, the equine frolics found themselves reprised the following year, in *The Lady of the Stable* (aka *WAVE*).

As one can gather from such descriptions, Satô's films are indeed very kinky and very violent – considerably more so than the average pink film – and it is undoubtedly for this reason that they have attracted so much attention from foreigners. Their lack of restraint has unleashed a torrent of purple prose manifesting a mixture of vicariousness, fascination, revulsion and incomprehension. The unflattering mug shot that graces Satô's section in Thomas Weisser's *Japanese Cinema Encyclopedia: The Sex Films* seems to have been selected to make him look like an out-patient from a psychiatric ward, while his out-of-context quote in Jack Hunter's *Eros in Hell* – "I want to make a film which has the influence to drive its audience mad, and to make them commit murder" – has been gleefully replicated in numerous sources as if it held the key to the cinematic pathologies manifested in his work.³⁴¹ Much also has been made of the controversial (and somewhat hare-brained) decision to cast the infamous cannibal killer Issei Sagawa in a cameo in *The Bedroom* (1992). During a stint studying in Paris in the early '80s, Sagawa murdered and ate a Dutch fellow-student named Renée Hartevelt. After a token jail sentence, he returned to Japan a free man due to the intervention of his powerful and influential father (who fortuitously happened to be the president of Kurita Water Industries), and became something of a celebrity in certain strange circles – he appeared on numerous TV talk shows, produced both a manga and a novel detailing his experiences, and even had his own column in a tabloid newspaper at one point.

And yet has Satô, this most infamous of pink practitioners, been misrepresented? It's true, his exercises in extremity have been interpreted by foreign viewers as symptomatic of an underlying pornographic culture of decadence and perversion within Japan, and they've also attracted plenty of criticism in their home country too. But so much of what has been written about the director sells him short, merely skimming the surface of an oeuvre that, for those that dare to look in more detail, readily offers itself up to a more in-depth dissection.

Born in Shizuoka City on 15 August, 1959, Hisayasu Satô is credited with directing almost 70 works. The majority of these belong to the pink genre and were



above: Consuming passions in Hisayasu Satô's *The Bedroom* (1992).
©Kokuei/Shinto

made between 1985 and 1995, though after directing *Rafureshia*³⁴² (1995) he pretty much left this sector behind him to embark on other projects for different markets. Aside from making two gay titles for ENK (a company that we shall look at in the following chapter), he returned only once to this field, with *Soft Skin* for Kokuei in 1998, a film which broke markedly from his usual style and whose primary point of interest lies in the casting of former Roman Porno starlets Moeko Ezawa and Junko Asahina. In 1996, he started to shoot a handful of straight-to-video titles, which ironically were graced with higher budgets than his pink work. These include: *In the Thicket*, a fantastical and slightly ghoulish reinterpretation of the Ryûnosuke Akutagawa short story that formed the basis for Akira Kurosawa's celebrated *Rashomon*; *Night of an Anatomical Dummy*, which features the unforgettable scene of an adolescent schoolboy masturbating with his father's detached prosthetic arm; the slightly more conventional *Let's Meet in a Dream*; and the notorious gore movie *Naked Blood*. Though none of these can be considered pink films in the strict sense, they cover similar thematic ground to his earlier work, and in fact, *Naked Blood* was actually a remake of an earlier pink production from 1987 entitled *Lustmord*, scripted by erstwhile pink actor Taketoshi Watari. Though he did appear in a cameo (as a police detective) in *Shabondama Elegy* (1999) – a Dutch-Japanese co-production directed by Ian Kerkhof – in terms of major filmmaking projects, Satô kept a low profile as the new millennium dawned. In 2005, he made a spectacular return to form with the *Caterpillar* (*Imomushi*) segment in the lavish horror omnibus based on the short stories of Edogawa Rampo, *Rampo Noir*. He followed this with *Si-sei* (2006), an adaptation of the Junichirô Tanizaki short story *Tattoo*, and the director's first work to be shot on video.

Satô is a challenging and unconventional filmmaker at the best of times, but since it is his pink work that represents his vision at its most undiluted and confrontational, it is only right that we focus on this early part of his filmography. Satô's filmmaking career

begins, typically for a director of his generation, with two self-made 8mm *jishu eiga*: the 18-minute *Lovers of the Silver Screen* (1978), and the 46-minute *Desire Without Tomorrow* (1980). These two films are unavailable for viewing, but they were clearly of sufficient quality to lead to his first paid employment in the film industry, when in 1981 a friend introduced him to Kan Mukai's Shishi Pro, where he started work as an assistant director. Within a couple of years he had his first script in production, for a film directed by Yôsuke Nishida entitled *Sensuous Wife: Keep Putting It In* (1983), which he wrote under the name of Hisakazu Hata (a pseudonym that he would later also occasionally use for his directing work). Like Zeze, his reasons for entering the pink industry were mainly pragmatic: "I was 25 years old when I became a director and it was almost impossible to have this kind of an opportunity elsewhere. Things are different now as a lot of young people are doing good work in the TV film industry, but that is how it was at that time."³⁴³ And so, after three years of serving as an assistant under directors like Yôjirô Takita and Kaoru Umezawa, he made his debut in 1985, with *Distorted Sense of Touch*, released theatrically as *Violent Love! Secret Lolita Hunting*.

Shishi Pro were a production, not a distribution company, and so it came about that many of Satô's early works were actually circulated by Xces and ENK, and also Nikkatsu, as supporting films for their Roman Porno features. As Shishi began winding down in the early '90s, Satô started making films for Kokuei, with whom he made some of his most ambitious and best-known titles, like *The Bedroom*, *Birthday* and *Love-Zero=Infinity*.

Like most pink directors, Hisayasu Satô tended to use the same casts and collaborators from work to work. The Zeze-gumi ('group') used by Takahisa Zeze for example usually includes the actors Takeshi Itô, Yôta Kawase and Yumeka Sasaki, the assistant director Rei Sakamoto, cameraman Kôichi Saitô, and scriptwriter Kishû Izuchi, among others. The Hisayasu Satô-gumi includes the regular performers Kiyomi Itô, Yutaka Ikejima, Kôichi Imaizumi (both of whom, as we shall see, became filmmakers in their own right), and Kazuhiro Sano (at least, up until the time he made his own pink theatrical debut), along with scriptwriter Shirô Yumeno (a penname for Tôru Bessho).

It was during his early period at Shishi Pro that the director became acquainted with Yumeno, who had written Yôjirô Takita's *The Tightly Bound* (1984), on which Satô AD-ed and also put in a brief cameo appearance. Yumeno provided most of Satô's scripts up until the 1994 title *Love-Zero=Infinity*, though the two later paired up again during the resuscitation of the director's career fortunes, marked by *Rampo Noir* and *Si-sei*. His scripts represent some of the pink genre's most intricate, tightly-plotted and sophisticated, often adopting complex (not to mention convoluted) crime thriller formats with either an investigative journalist or

private detective leading the viewers into the heart of the horrors portrayed in titles like *RE-WIND* (1988) and *Survey Map of a Paradise Lost* (with its wiretapping scenario apparently inspired by Francis Ford Coppola's 1974 suspense thriller *The Conversation*).

If Kanako Kishi can be described as the female face of Kazuhiro Sano's films, and Hotaru Hazuki the star of Toshiki Satô's most emblematic titles, then it is Kiyomi Itô who embodies the dark heart at the centre of Hisayasu Satô's narratives. After making her debut in Ryûji Akitsu's *High School Girl: Thrill of the Chase* for Million Film in 1984, from *Distorted Sense of Touch* onwards Itô's small size and youthful looks coupled with a smouldering and somewhat dangerous sexuality made her Satô's favoured leading lady. She proved particularly adept at playing guarded, secretive characters with a slightly unpredictable, unhinged quality – people who might seem normal to casual observers, but whose actions are anything but. As well as being one of the few actresses willing to allow herself to be repeatedly put through the harsh paces of the director's typically punishing fare, her creative input at the scripting stage made her a valuable asset.

Fitting into the broader field of the urban paranoid fantasies that characterised the '80s, Satô's films have often been compared to those of David Cronenberg – and not wholly inappropriately. His stories occur in present-day inner-city dystopias; sleek but sterile settings in which flesh is detached from its natural



above: Tanizaki for the digital age: Japanese DVD cover art for Hisayasu Satô's *Si-sei* (2006).

organic environment and the societal rot spreads from the neglected shadows hidden beneath the neon glare. They feature characters who have fallen through the cracks; violent rogue elements who engage in acts of transgression and sullen withdrawn teenagers who seek affirmation of their existence through acts of prostitution, self-abuse, and voyeurism. Like the vicarious thrill-seekers in the Canadian director's *Videodrome* (1983), they are drawn like moths to the flame through the 'Doors in the Wall' opened up through the use of drugs and new communications technologies, to echo the term coined by H.G. Wells and popularised by Aldous Huxley.

The intellectual themes of many of Satô's films are, in reality, far closer to those of the horror genre than the erotic film. Like Salvador Dali and Luis Buñuel's indelible image of a razor bisecting an eyeball in *Un chien Andalou* (1929), mirrored by the similar ocular abuse contained within Satô's own films *Naked Blood* and *TURTLE VISION*, they present visual affront rather than visual pleasure. The camera's fixed, unwavering stare forces us, the viewer, to partake in the outrages perpetrated onscreen as if our eyes were pinned open like Alex's from *A Clockwork Orange*, with horror upon horror pumped onto our retinas until we can take no more.

Satô's consistent visual tropes include the use of scrolling computer text for the onscreen credits and eerie soundtracks blending electronic howls, hums and bursts of white noise in the vein of the discordant funereal dirges of industrial musicians like Coil, Lustmord and Japan's own Merzbow. They owe much of their bleak, unnerving atmosphere of alienation and abjection to the modern landscape of Tokyo, especially that of the Shinjuku area, with its gleaming office blocks dominating the skyline to the west of the main train station – megaliths to the economic prosperity of the '80s – while deep in the shadows at their foot on the eastside lies the hedonistic warren of strip clubs, soaplands and hostess bars known as Kabukicho. The district's main strip represents a consumerist's paradise of department stores and glitzy restaurants, but beneath this illusionary veneer of surface normality he presents a pressure cooker of perversions and suppressed desires. In Satô's world, Tokyo is a cold and loveless place populated by loners and misfits unable to form any meaningful emotional bond unless through violence and other acts of social transgression. They find anonymity in the milling crowds whose members seem oblivious to one another, hide out in desolate undeveloped urban wastelands between the skyscrapers and seek privacy and a place to breathe on rooftops, abandoned portacabins and, more bizarrely, in tents and rubber dinghies floating offshore.

'Discommunication' is the word used by Japanese critics to describe the ultimate concerns of Satô's work. Many observers have noted a tendency among the Japanese to avoid direct eye contact when speaking, as

well as an ostensible indifference to the chaotic world around them, often betrayed by curious, cautious surreptitious glances. Satô sees this essential autism as characteristic of modern Japanese society. "There is a problem of communication among people. We don't know how to do it any more – and this causes pain."³⁴⁴ Related to this is the increasing wider problem of social withdrawal, a phenomenon known in Japan as *hikikomori* that is especially prevalent among the adolescent males. This tendency to retreat from physical interpersonal relationships into virtual worlds of their own making is a tendency Satô recognises to an extent in himself as well: "In a certain way, I too was a film hermit. During my adolescence, I spent all my time shut-up in the world of cinema. It was my own withdrawal into myself. I spent all my days and nights focusing only on cinema. I was 14 or 15, trying to sneak in theatres showing adult movies."³⁴⁵

If Satô's films represent uncomfortable viewing – which they most certainly do – then this is not solely due to the acts staged in front of the camera, but also the way in which they are presented to the viewer. The reality shown on screen is rarely passed off as being just the subjective experience of his characters. If they get their kicks from the atrocities they commit, then we get ours from watching them indulging in their perverted desires. Emotionally, we are kept outside of their world looking in, but never allowed to forget that our role as a spectator is essentially that of a voyeur, as we become stitched into the diegesis through a variety of visual (and sometimes aural) mediatory devices. Scenes are presented through camera viewfinders, CCTV surveillance technology, as grainy 8mm or video footage, still photographs and even as photocopies, complicating identification with the characters and notions of individual perspective. For Sato's protagonists, reality is often only perceived as such when it occurs on camera, and the director's own evocative choice of titles often hinge around the visual senses and the act of looking: *An Aria on Gazes*³⁴⁶ for *The Bedroom*; *Labyrinth of Primary Colours* for *Human Torture: Three-Grade Punishment* (1992); and *Welcome to the Illusion* for *Sister's Serial Rape* (1989).

Take, for example, the unnerving opening scene of *Horse and Woman and Dog*, in which we see the deviant madame of the house sitting on her balcony, checking her makeup in a small compact mirror before slowly rotating it to direct her gaze back at the camera so that it appears she is staring right at us. Her eyes, however, are hidden behind a pair of dark sunglasses, making it impossible to read her expression. It is left for the viewer to decipher whether her inscrutable stare is admonishing us for looking at something we shouldn't, or whether it is a dare to go further. As the sound of a girl squealing rises on the soundtrack, she tilts the mirror further to reflect the sun's light on the acts taking place within the house, of her captive being stripped

naked by her two brawny accomplices and smeared with cake before a large dog is led into the room.

A more disorienting labyrinth of gazes is provided in the film *Birthday* (1993). The original release title, *Molester Train: Dirty Deeds*, signals this as belonging to the long-running series made popular by Satô's *senpai*, Yôjirô Takita, though it couldn't be more different in its austere tone. A young man (Imaizumi) alone in his apartment closes the blinds and turns on a video projector. We watch him as he sits on his couch, and then we see the grainy video footage blown up and projected onto a large screen dominating the apartment wall so that the individual scan-lines and pixels are clearly visible. The film switches to this jerky, handheld video recording, and we then are presented with the first-person filmed footage of a bustling commuter line platform with a train pulling into the station. After cutting to video footage shot inside the crowded carriage, the film switches back to standard 35mm, effectively bringing us into the scene's immediate present tense, and we watch the camcorder operator – the same man in the previous scene watching his home movies in his darkened room – looking through the viewfinder at something just behind the viewer. The next cut reveals a smartly dressed businessman standing closely behind a young woman (Kiyomi Itô), looking at himself in a handheld

mirror. The woman's sighs of pleasure betoken that one of his hands, kept hidden below the frame, is busily exploring the lower regions of her body, more explicitly shown in the following footage of under-the-skirt groping that is a standard feature of the *Molester Train* films. The film cuts between these darkened fingers-and-panties shots to the molester's perspective, as he gazes narcissistically at the mirror, so that while we can see his blank expression, he is simultaneously gazing out at us. Who do we identify with; molester, molested or cameraman, or do we remain just a detached observer? Itô's face can also be seen reflected in the mirror, before she turns round and snatches it from him, begging him for more while rubbing herself against him. More dark groping footage ensues, but it becomes intercut with shots of the young man filming the scene, before switching back to the pixillated images he is capturing on video. His camera pans up to another young woman (played by Yumika Hayashi) standing behind the suit-wearing molester. As she returns the video's gaze, it is soon made apparent that she, too, is being groped by another salaryman with his back to the camera.

Reflections in mirrors, pools of water and panes of glass are a recurrent feature in Satô's work, as are scenes of his characters staring blankly at the camera and out of the screen, violating cinema's sacred fourth wall.



above: Yumika Hayashi caught on camera in *Birthday* (1993), Hisayasu Satô's addition to the *Molester Train* line.
©Kokuei/Shintoho

Similarly, the characteristic deployment of a myriad of secondary devices that serve to keep the individual one step removed from the events portrayed onscreen intentionally make the spectator aware of their complicity in the atrocities or perversions they are witnessing, while drawing attention to the ability of cinema – pornographic or otherwise – to provide a safe cocoon of illusionary pleasures experienced solitarily, without pain, exertion or responsibility.

To take one further example, one of Shirô Yumeno's more extreme scripts for Satô, *RE-WIND*, is kicked off when a gruesome snuff video is discovered discarded in a porno video booth. The images on the video, which we later witness Kiyomi Itô's self-styled 'crime hunter' watching with her boyfriend, are truly appalling – first person views of women being assaulted and murdered by a camcorder-wielding sex maniac, followed by recordings of their arms being severed at the wrist, complete with arterial spurts, and even more disturbing, shots of their fingernails being graphically torn off. It is later revealed that the camera itself, in a nod to Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* (1960), is the instrument of their death, containing a knife that springs out of a slot next to the lens. One of the film's most memorable set pieces sees a victim tied naked,

with arms and legs outstretched, in a deserted basement otherwise completely empty save for a giant video screen on the back wall and an untidy assortment of monitors lying strewn on the floor surrounding her. But for the light cast from the glowing video screens, the room would be pitch black. As we watch the scopophilic sociopath approaching from his own viewpoint, the blade juts into the left-hand side of the frame and, just at the point of penetration, the image cuts away abruptly to her frozen scream, magnified and replicated on the surrounding screens.

Such scenes of secret acts behind four walls, amplified, distorted, fragmented and replicated *ad absurdum* are multitudinous in Satô's oeuvre. On an immediate aesthetic and stylistic level, their purpose is obvious. They serve to emphasise that the projected film is ultimately only a flattened two-dimensional image framed within a screen of finite limits, with the use of such subsidiary screens and mirror reflections recursively opening up limitless visual possibilities within this frame. But there is also something more complex behind Satô's method.

At an early stage in his life, Satô became aware of the powerful ability of the camera to distort the very reality it purports to capture objectively. One only has to



above: *The Secret Garden* (1987), deep in the heart of Shinjuku.
©Nikkatsu Corporation

think of the flashing stills camera that adds a stroboscopic intensity to the horrifying images captured by the perpetrator of *Lolita Vibrator Torture* (this film provided Takeshi Itô, an omnipresent figure in the modern pink film, with his first ever role). As a teenager, he was especially interested in photography as an art form, and in fact originally contemplated taking up his hobby professionally. He studied photography at university in Tokyo before he opted to become a filmmaker. He was intrigued by the ability of the camera to serve as an untrammelled eye, crawling into spaces where humans can't go, and to look at objects from impossible angles. The camera's ability to distort space by using different lenses is something that has been carried through into his films. Exterior street scenes are often shot using wide-angle fisheye lenses that reflect the disoriented perspectives of his protagonists. Arguably the most shocking revelation of *Lolita Vibrator Torture*, which makes its director's title of *The Secret Garden* seem disturbingly apt, is when it is revealed that the apparently cavernous space in which the atrocities take place is in fact the cramped container of a truck parked, ignored and unnoticed, in a multi-storey high above one of the busiest parts of the city. (The film ends on an ironic note, with the sole surviving schoolgirl inviting in a camera crew and passing off the photographs of her anguished classmates as her own works of modern art – it's seldom acknowledged, but Satô possesses a wicked sense of humour.)

For Satô, the camera also has the ability to act as a mask for its operator. Growing up in a neighbourhood where there were a lot of fires and accidents, he noted the psychological advantages of looking at life through the lens. Rather than acting as a curious bystander, peering at such incidents through the viewfinder seemed to offer a form of validation, if not justification, for what might otherwise be seen as straightforward rubbernecking.

The stills camera is only one of the devices used to frame Satô's world. The increased intrusiveness into our day-to-day life of visual technologies like television, videos and computer games also work their way into the films' substance. In everyday life, they provide a means of perceiving and 'knowing' the concrete outside world, and those others who inhabit it, without any direct contact with it. It is no coincidence that the pornographic Adult Video proliferated during the decade Satô started directing. "The porn explosion has had a specific impact on those youngsters... to the point that when they have their first sexual experience they are mimicking scenes they watched."³⁴⁷

Hardcore AV, at least in its Japanese manifestation, provides the illusion of a raw and undressed view of the physical sexual act, a means of eavesdropping onto what would otherwise be a private activity while offering the dream of the complete knowledge of the female body. The stylised pink film, by contrast, is one

very much constructed by the maker. Given this, the tangible disjunction between the image and aural environment that is a feature of the pink film due to the practice of recording and dubbing the sound after shooting, almost seems like an aesthetic decision in Satô's films, rather than a pragmatic one necessitated by time and budget. It heightens the sense of unreality or hyper-reality experienced by the characters drawn into this multimedia mirror maze.

Satô's narratives are generally critical of those who use new technologies as opiates rather than diversions. As the director notes, "Society has developed to the point that today the real and the virtual world have split into two. There is a confrontation between the real and virtual world."³⁴⁸ This brave new world presents an entirely specious reality, one conveyed purely via the modalities of vision and sound and in which, divorced from their sources, images adopt a life of their own. *Kyrie Eleison* (1993) – whose title comes from the short repeated invocation ('Lord, have mercy') used in the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Anglican Churches – features a young lady who makes her living recording and selling other people's bedroom activities, though her own personal life is a shambles. As her boyfriend lies comatose in a stark white hospital room following a traffic accident, she becomes embroiled in a religious cult named Korin that sells hypnotic trance videos alleged to represent the spirit world, until eventually she loses all her sense of self.

And the analogy between the escapism provided by new technology and perception-altering drugs is often made explicit. In *Naked Blood*, one of the guinea pigs on which the Ecstasy/Prozac-like drug developed by 17-year-old prodigy Eiji (carrying on from the work of his father, who punningly named the drug 'MySon') is tested is a chronic insomniac with an aversion to plants. She regularly retreats into the safe haven of a Virtual Reality headset that should cut out any extraneous external stimuli. Instead, it rather strangely transports her into a hallucinogenically-shot desert landscape representing the memories of a giant cactus she is hooked up to.

The Bedroom is inspired by the Yasunari Kawabata novel *House of Sleeping Beauties* (*Nemureru Bijo*, published 1961), the story of a clandestine establishment that caters to the desires of impotent old men. For the right fee, they are offered a beautiful, drugged and oblivious young virgin to curl up next to and relive the sensations of their youth. Satô and Yumeno adapt the tale to the female perspective. Under the influence of a powerful sleeping drug called Halcion, bored women submit themselves to the lecherous demands of the paying patrons of an exclusive underground sex club, where they are closely inspected and fondled in a dark room illuminated by the static of a large video screen behind them. As well as numbing all bodily sensations, the women are so

subdued by the drug that they remember nothing of their experience within 'the sleeping room', which makes it all the more disturbing when various people associated with them start getting murdered. When the main protagonist, Kyôko, who compares her pill-popping as akin to a "magic carpet ride", stops taking them and feigning sleep before she is whisked away to the club, the boundaries between dream and reality become increasingly difficult to discern, especially when it is revealed that she has an identical looking sister named Maya.

Without giving any more away, it is worth mentioning that Kiyomi Itô also played identical twins representing two sides of a split personality in *Fuga Music for Alpha and Beta*, and also that when she scribbles her name on a piece of paper, we see the *kyô* part of her name is the phonetic reading of the character *kagami*, for mirror. Also, the drug Halcion is actually the name of a genuine sleeping tablet that was causing a great deal of controversy back in the real world at this time. It allegedly possessed serious psychological side effects when taken in large doses, and was linked to at least one incident of murder.³⁴⁹ One can assume that the headline in the newspaper that appears at the beginning, warning of the dangers of Halcion, was genuine. In the film, Kyôko likens the drug as being, "like spring was put to an end by death", referring to the unconscious sleeping state as akin to the rainy season that occurs in June: this is a pun based on the Japanese pronunciation *haru-shi-on* which evokes the characters 'Spring' (*haru*), 'Death' (*shi*) and 'Sound' (*on*). A further outside reference comes from the previously-mentioned casting of cannibal killer Issei Sagawa, who at one point licks the bare rump of the sleeping Itô, just as he had sunk his teeth into the bare buttocks of the murdered Renée Hartevelt some ten years before. Coupled with the recurring shots of Itô peering into her fridge at something unsettling, this particular in-joke of Yumeno and Satô's might be seen as being in particularly bad taste.³⁵⁰

On the other side of the coin, technological tools like video cameras can also serve as a means of communication between Satô's young protagonists,



above: Sensory overload in *The Bedroom* (1992). ©Kokuei/Shintoho

"people who find more reality in the images they shoot than in reality itself."³⁵¹ In *Birthday*, the young man who roams the train network capturing on video the overt sexual acts that take place there is actually using his footage to reconstruct a posthumous home movie from the shattered remnants of his broken family: the molester; the 'kitchen drunk' housewife rubbing herself against her fellow passengers; and the flasher exposing himself to the camera. When the carriage has emptied, he finds himself at the end of the line with Kei (Hayashi), another aimless drifter who rides the trains through boredom to escape from the claustrophobic city spaces. Having been recently cast aside by her boyfriend, Kei reveals her plans to commit suicide on her 20th birthday by blowing herself up with dynamite, but in the meantime the two forge a close bond as they sit together, watching the projected footage in his darkened bedroom, the screen filtering out the distractions of the seething urban backdrop of mischannelled sexual energy that threatens to engulf them.

Scenes of women only opening up fully to their partners when they are being spoken to and filmed through a video camera are another leitmotiv, as if the act of conversation for these women itself were akin to something of a performance. And again, it is best to interpret this in the light of the Japanese AV film, in which sex scenes are often preceded by documentary-styled mock interviews in which the subjects are questioned by an off-screen male voice before they are coaxed into undressing.

Even when not facilitated by auxiliary hardware such as video cameras and VR headsets, sex is seldom a straight affair in Satô's films. It is usually loveless, clinical and sterile, conducted using baby oils, Vaseline, industrial gunk, surgical gloves, polythene sheets and cling film, as if the sensation of skin upon skin were too intense for its participants. One of the clients in *The Bedroom* wears little more than a gasmask and a pair of elbow-length PVC gloves as he sniffs at the prone naked body he has paid to paw at. The closest this film gets to a normal, healthy sex scene is when Kiyomi Itô



above: Cannibal killer Issei Sagawa's controversial cameo in *The Bedroom*. ©Kokuei/Shintoho

and her computer programmer lover, Takeshi Itô, make love beneath a sun lamp (apparently he hasn't "got time to lie around in the sun"), their eyes completely masked, with him wearing dark glasses and her a sleep mask of the type handed out on airplanes.

The usage of a whole host of fetishistic paraphernalia in general manifests an obsession with hygiene and a fear of other people's bodies that characterised the period – one marked by a global media panic about the AIDS epidemic and a rise in the so-called 'body horror' genre best represented by Cronenberg's *The Fly* (1986). In *Survey Map of a Paradise Lost*, the skin allergy suffered by Kiyomi Itô's character renders the direct touch of her husband – the sadistic and suicidal IT worker played by Sano – too hot to handle, and hence their lovemaking takes the form of him binding her tightly in telephone wire and applying electric shocks to her genitalia. It later transpires that these unhealthy sexual proclivities have been exacerbated by his having contracted HIV, deterring him from normal penetrative sex.

By the early years of the '90s, Hisayasu Satô was already something of a *persona non grata* in the industry due to the extremity of uncomfortable sadomasochistic scenes like these. While fitting in with the director's overall vision ("My impression of the current Japanese society is that the youth needs to hurt itself in order to exist. There is a real, valid search for pain... I believe – and this is my personal feeling – there are certain individuals who... while trying to express their feelings... can only do so through violence"),³⁵² such scenes nevertheless proved something of a turn-off for most pink audiences.

The early '90s saw Satô curbing his approach somewhat to fit in with the climate of the time, and also shooting several scripts by a woman writer named Kyôko Godai. From synopses alone³⁵³ (with the exception of *Birthday*, they're not among the director's more widely available films), it doesn't sound as if Godai's gender had much bearing on the actual content of titles such as the jailbait rape fantasy *Angel in the Dark* (1993). Nevertheless, even the films shot from scripts by Yumeno at the time dramatically toned down the blood, rape and violence of their early collaborations, presenting a rather less provocative, though just as bleak, worldview in the films *Kyrie Eleison*, *The Bedroom* and *Love-Zero=Infinity*.

This latter film – one of Satô's last in the genre as well as one of his best – once more brings in allusions to the debilitating HIV virus first introduced in *Survey Map of a Paradise Lost*. Like Kathryn Bigelow's more conventional horror movie *Near Dark* (1987), it updates the vampire mythos to the AIDS era as Kiyomi Itô plays the mysterious but deadly beauty who wanders aloofly through the streets of Shinjuku dressed in black, eyes masked with dark sunglasses due to a chronic skin condition, while Takeshi Itô plays the withdrawn out-

of-towner hired by her doctor husband to shadow her. When she turns round and notices him trailing her, the two embark on a short-lived, mutually obsessive, *amour fou* that ultimately spells doom for them both.

Though boasting one of Yumeno's finest scripts and some of Satô's most controlled direction, and livened up as it is by some oily and vigorous sex scenes, *Love-Zero=Infinity* naturally enough proved to be too gloomy and depressing for the sex market. It is doubtful whether the project ever would have even got off the ground were it not for the backing of production company Kokuei. Pink production companies have to pitch their projects to distributors before shooting gets underway, submitting completed scripts and details of cast and director in advance. In this case, the distributor Shinto-ho had fixed the title as *Dirty Wife: Getting Wet* and had anticipated a film that utilised these elements. Satô and Yumeno submitted a completely different script from the one that was eventually used, and thereby were able to get the project green-lit.

It was not the last time such tactics were used by a director to get the film that they wanted to make realised, as can be seen in the case of Mitsuru Meike's *The Glamorous Life of Sachiko Hanai*. But though Satô's film was highly regarded outside of the pink world, the incident effectively presaged the director's departure from the industry. His few attempts at redemption, with the lighter, more humorous fluff of *Rafureshia* and *Soft Skin*, proved relatively ineffectual (although the director counts the former as his favourite of all his films, rather surprisingly given how different it is from the rest of his oeuvre), and his role in the pink film renaissance, just like Sano's, was effectively over by the mid-'90s. Nevertheless, we can surmise that, as the bulk of Satô's best work was undertaken before the other three directors even made their debuts, it was he who was most instrumental in stirring up interest in a genre that had at the time pretty much settled into formula.

Following a brief run of straight-to-video titles, Satô spent several years in the wilderness, unable to find a producer brave enough to back his potent vision. Eventually one came along in the form of Dai Miyazaki, who had previously been behind such projects as Takashi Miike's notorious films *Audition* (2000) and *Ichii the Killer* (2001), and Toshiaki Toyoda's *Blue Spring* (2002), and the results were the director's contribution to the *Rampo Noir* project. With the unabashed grotesquerie of *The Caterpillar* strictly dividing opinions as to whether it was the most technically virtuoso of the four sections or whether it presented a vision that was just that little too strong for most (according to the *Variety* review, it was the "hardest entry to stomach"),³⁵⁴ it is certain that Satô's name will never become a household one. But for the time being, we can at least be glad that he is back on the map and directing again.

Desperate Housewives: Toshiki Satô

It is probably worth mentioning straight away that Toshiki Satô is not related in any way to his more volatile namesake Hisayasu. Their shared surname is a common enough one in Japan, though it has to be said that it does seem particularly ubiquitous in pink filmmaking circles. Nor do the two directors' approaches to their craft bear much in the way of comparison, though one can really say the same about all of the Four Devils.

It is not immediately clear from watching Toshiki Satô's films however, how exactly it was that his name became associated with the *shitennô* movement. His distinctive brand of low-key woman-centred dramas are neither as confrontational as those of his contemporaries, nor as dramatically, technically or intellectually overwrought. What they do present, it's true, is a rather depressing portrait of life in Heisei-era Japan, but they do so with a wry sense of humour and a genuine sense of sympathy for their emotionally-destitute protagonists that is generally lacking from his colleagues' work. Satô's male characters, it has to be said, cut rather pitiable, pathetic figures, either pimply youths or gurning grotesques with bad teeth and glasses whose eccentricities are exaggerated to emphasise that a woman's lot is not a happy one. But it is also true that the quirks and foibles of both sexes fall under a good deal of scrutiny.

Born in Fukushima prefecture in 1961, in terms of his background in the industry the younger Satô does seem something of an odd man out. Whereas Zeze and Hisayasu Satô had emerged from Shishi Pro, a company in whose films Sano made many appearances, Toshiki Satô entered the pink industry as a freelancer, working

initially as an assistant to the directors Ichirô Kitami and Yukio Kitazawa. After a few false starts,³⁵⁵ he made his pink film debut in 1989, with *Dream Woman*. Shot on Super 16mm with simultaneous sound and distributed by Shintoho Video as *Beast*, it was produced by a now-defunct outfit called Burst Brain Products, founded in 1988 by another Satô – Yasushi Satô, who started his career as an actor in films by Ryûichi Hiroki and Genji Nakamura, among others, before moving briefly into production. Before Toshiki Satô moved in to become a more central fixture at Kokuei, many of his early works, including his best-known, *Tandem* (1994), were produced by the company Outcast Produce – run by a man named Haruki Iwata – as were those of Toshiya Ueno, a younger director whom we'll encounter in a while.³⁵⁶

Again, distilling the essence of a director with such a sizeable body of work behind him (just under forty titles in this case) is a tricky task, especially as it is Satô's later films that are more readily available for viewing. The general theme of these is the mundanity of everyday life, the immersion of the individual in crowds, and the repressed emotional lives of the everyday denizens of Tokyo and its outlying districts; white-collar salarymen, single women and, in particular, housewives.

A number of Satô's films have been released as part of the *Apartment Wife* (*Danchi-zuma*) sub-genre – a series instigated by Nikkatsu with their first ever Roman Porno movie, *Afternoon Affair* – that was later adopted wholeheartedly by the pink industry.³⁵⁷ Throughout the late-'90s and beyond, Satô pretty much claimed this area as his own, in the sense that, just as Yôjirô Takita had done with the *Molester Train* films in the '80s, he added



above: Married life is not all its cracked up to be for Hotaru Hazuki in *Apartment Wife: Midday Adultery* (1997).
©Kokuei/Shintoho



above: Yôta Kawase forced to perform 'honban' on-set with Kyôko Kazama: one of the many industry in-jokes in Toshiki Satô's *Woman of the House: Going to the Class Reunion* (2004). ©Kokuei/Shintoho

his own highly distinctive touch to the series in titles like *Apartment Wife: Midday Adultery* (1997), *New Apartment Wife: Adultery Is the Taste of Honey (Only for Tonight)* (1999) and *Apartment Wife: Adulterous Passion* (2000).

Unlike Takita's comic cycle though, one hesitates to use the word 'series' to describe the individual films bearing the *Apartment Wife* label. Though their basic settings were similar, and they often make impressive use of the aloof, composed and slightly melancholic figure of Hotaru Hazuki in the title roles, the individual entries are not connected in any way.³⁵⁸ Satô also made works without this prefix whose content was remarkably similar, like *Adultery Diary: One More Time While I'm Still Wet* (1996). This latter film's setup is fairly representative, featuring Hotaru Hazuki as the housebound hausfrau dreaming of a more fulfilling existence beyond the four walls within which she is confined while her husband spends long hours away from home at the office. Dreaming of becoming a novelist, she enrolls in a literary class where she falls prey to her lecherous tutor, played by Kazuhiro Sano.

Satô became so identified with the series and with this kind of scenario in general that his later film *Woman*

of the House: Going to the Class Reunion (2004) almost seems like an industry in-joke in his attempt to update it to the more hedonistic climate of the new millennium. Much of its humour derives from, not only a familiarity with the director's typical fare, but also with the personalities of its main performers, Yôta Kawase and Yumeka Sasaki, cast here in the roles of the married couple Yûji and Akiko Kawase. Two of Kokuei's most familiar faces, they have acted together in over a dozen features, including Shinji Imaoka's *Molester Train: Benten's Butt* (1998), Takahisa Zeze's *Anarchy in Japansuke* (1999), and Mitsuru Meike's *Secondhand Love* (2000). The two appear so often together one might almost assume that there is something going on between them off-screen, but in conversation with them, they likened their relationship to that of a brother and sister, with Sasaki claiming that she gets an uncomfortable, irritated feeling every time he touches her during their nude scenes.

In this film, the two actors play to type. Kawase is the loveable dolt, full of puppyish enthusiasm and a genuine eagerness to please, but also a general air of incompetence about him, and Sasaki, she of the

cropped hair, boyishly slim hips and trademark tattoo on her midriff, trading on her usual bright, confident but approachable screen persona. Sasaki is a man's woman, and she obviously wears the trousers in this household, perhaps following on from their roles together in Meike's *Secondhand Love*, in which Sasaki played a young career woman who is tempted to stray from her partner of three years after she bumps into a former boyfriend (played by Kawase) who leads an altogether more rough and ready existence as a construction worker. In the new Satô film, Kawase effectively plays himself, a penniless pink actor who dreams of hitting the big time with a real acting career.

Going to the Class Reunion depicts a particularly eventful day for them both, as Yûji comes under pressure from the director of the latest pink production he is working on to put in a more convincing performance by going the whole 'honban' hog for the cameras with his buxom co-star Kyôko Kazama, whilst Akiko bumps into a former old flame during an otherwise disastrous school reunion. Some of the scenes are played as broad slapstick, with knowing pokes at the behind-the-scenes world of pink provided by a cameo from real-life Kokuei filmmaker Meike as Kazama's henpecked husband, and the scene of Kawase demanding why his onscreen partner should get paid more for performing real sex ("Because no one is looking at the guy," explains his director). These are balanced nicely by the genuine onscreen rapport of the two leads and some interesting points about modern attitudes to sex, with Yûji reluctant to go all the way in order to keep his job, while Akiko allows herself to be manoeuvred into a Love Hotel by her old boyfriend.

One possible source of frustration to traditional pink audiences is that Satô's later films are rather light on actual sex (something shared by his successors like Shinji Imaoka). The director tends to frame the bed scenes so that the nudity of the female body is effectively blocked off from direct view by their partners, or it falls outside of the edge of the frame altogether. The performers may be partially clothed, or the acts take place in rooms so dark as to render them almost invisible. Whereas most pink films get underway almost immediately with an opening 'number', the first sex scene often occurs some way into Satô's films. In order to reveal aspects of the participants' personalities, the editing also often integrates what should be, by generic norms, showstoppers in their own right into the main dramatic body. As such, his work conforms more to what one might generally expect of a low-budget independent feature with a smattering of nudity than a sex film.

For instance, the rather unglamorous deflowering of Nikki Sasaki's needy high school girl Chisato in a dingy bedroom at the fumbling hands of a greasy classmate in *The Lost Virgin* (2002) occurs about ten minutes into the film. The actress's slight frame hardly bristles with the

same showy self-confidence that the celebration of her loss of virginity might warrant if this were any standard adult fantasy, yet her performance remains true to the character and the film's premise.

But eroticism comes in many guises. For casual audiences coming to them cold, Toshiki Satô's films are certainly the most immediately accessible of those of the Four Devils. Their charm comes from his ability to build an emotional rapport with his audience by putting interesting characters in credible everyday situations. His lighter touch seems to have particularly endeared him to the new wave of curious but appreciative female fans whose first experience of this previously boys-only domain was provided by the 1994 Athenée Français event (this new audience is something we will look at in the following chapter). It has consequently ensured that, as the more hard-edged machismo contained within the films of Hisayasu Satô and Kazuhiro Sano began to fall out of favour in the middle of the decade, Toshiki Satô came to adopt a more central role at the production company that first stood behind the works of this unpopular foursome.

As producer and company president Daisuke Asakura has repeatedly stated, Kokuei is more interested in supporting directors who evolve and develop over time, rather than ones who tend to repeat themselves.³⁵⁹ Toshiki Satô can hardly be accused of not stretching himself, with films such as the 2001 title *Blue Sky* (*Aozora*, not to be confused with Zeze's own title for the 1989 film released originally as *Bestial Lust Demon: Rampage*) marking a considerable departure from his housewife dramas, despite being written by his regular collaborator on these films, Masahiro Kobayashi. This story's protagonist is a criminal loner on the run who ingratiates himself with a young couple who have just moved in together, unsettling their domestic accord.

Furthermore, Toshiki Satô's films have proven an easier sell to satellite TV networks and video distributors, so have turned a fairly consistent profit. According to Asakura, "Toshiki is the best. Kokuei's 'clean-up man' is Toshiki... We usually don't worry about Toshiki's stuff."³⁶⁰ In fact, more than any of the other figures in this chapter, he has influenced the style of the following generation of directors at Kokuei, collectively labelled the *shichifukujin*, or Seven Lucky Gods. Mitsuru Meike at one time worked as Satô's assistant director; Shinji Imaoka contributed some remarkable scripts for several of his later films, including *The Lost Virgin* and *Empty Room*; and Yûji Tajiri actually acted in this latter title. The films of the *shichifukujin* will be covered later, but it is worth mentioning that several of the titles discussed in this section were actually made after the Four Devils phenomenon had subsided and Kazuhiro Sano and Hisayasu Satô had directed their final pink films, and at a time when many of the subsequent wave of directors had already made their debuts.

On a stylistic level, Toshiki Satô's films are quirky and idiosyncratic, full of comically understated performances and possessing the same insouciant, laidback charm of the man himself. Their strengths lie in the subtle characterisation, the remarkably even-keeled handling of narrative and an altogether more playful approach. He is, it has to be said, a superb director of actors, as well as a highly talented *metteur en scène*. Japanese critic Kenji Fukuma sums up his appeal thus: "The attraction of his work lies in the speed and originality of his cuts, born from an admirable use of ellipses and digression, Satô has been praised in particular for his ability to keep up an extremely high level of narrative tension within the fixed limits of 60 minutes."³⁶¹

The words "extreme level of narrative tension" might be overstating the case a bit, but Satô's films certainly keep viewers on their toes. Take, for example, the early moments of *Empty Room* (2001). The film opens with the camera slowly panning around an unfurnished apartment before coming to rest on a young woman (Mao Nakagawa) lying dozily on the bare *tatami*, gazing blankly into space. In a half-daze she rises slowly from the position that she has been sleeping in and lights a cigarette. The sound of ecstatic sighs can be heard emerging from the neighbouring apartment – as suggested by the original title of *Apartment Wife: Moans from Next Door* – and she walks

cautiously over to put her ear to the wall, a wistful expression settling on her face as she seats herself down again, slides her hand under her skirt and begins to arouse herself. As the moans in the other apartment escalate, they are soon drowned out by her heavy breathing until she, too, reaches her peak and curls up in a ball on the floor, her climax proving somehow not quite satisfactory. As she begins to doze off again, the door to the apartment opens and a distracted-looking office worker (Yûji Tajiri) clutching a briefcase marches straight into the living room where she is lying, offers a quick hello, and walks past her out of frame, not even listening for a response. Who is he? Her husband? It would appear not, as, after pacing self-consciously around the room, he turns to her and apologises, "Excuse me, I live next door." Did he walk through the identical-looking door in this concrete warren of apartments by accident? He pauses for a moment before elaborating, "I just had the urge to walk into any old apartment." The lady stares at him embarrassedly, her tranquillity shattered by the stranger's incursion, before rising rapidly and formally introducing herself, with a curt bow, as Sachiko Kuroda.

The reasons for this peculiar encounter are revealed drop by drop. The salaryman, named Kobayashi, indeed lives next door, but essentially has nowhere to go, as his wife (Yumeka Sasaki) is conducting an extra-marital



above: Salaryman seduction: Takeshi Itô looks for love outside wedlock in *Empty Room* (2001).
©Kokuei/Shintoho

affair under his nose and he is simply too afraid to confront her lest it disrupt the fragile domestic accord. He has barely finished his explanation when Sachiko dashes from the apartment to her own home downstairs. Her husband (Takeshi Itô), in the act of retrieving a beer from the fridge, virtually ignores her as she hurries past him into the living room and begins dutifully folding the laundry; a typical evening scene in this married couple's life, one assumes. He then summons her to give him a massage, but when she starts making more romantic advances, he pushes her away, using his aching back as an excuse.

The opening five minutes are a model of narrative economy, defying expectation with almost every action or line of dialogue, but by the time they are over we already know everything we need to know about these three characters. Living in a fairly financially secure environment, Sachiko is nonetheless bored, emotionally and physically unfilled, and imprisoned in the house all day. Her sole reason for existence is to tend to her neurotic husband's every need, as if he were a baby. He is left burnt out and exhausted from his daily routine, and also in considerable physical pain: we later see him dangling comically from the ceiling in order to alleviate his crippling back problems. He is reliant upon Sachiko to provide a warm meal and a cosy nest for him to return to after his long hours in the office. Their lives are locked in mutual stasis, neither financially well-heeled enough to live relaxed and comfortably together, nor desperate or courageous enough to fight for something better. Kobayashi, meanwhile, has been left dazed and disillusioned, the very foundations of his workaday existence shattered by the flagrant cuckoldry of his tarty wife. She herself informs him in a later scene that their marriage is purely one of convenience, as she urges him to find a mistress and reminds him of their prenuptial arrangement to let each other do as they please. And so, as the rest of the film unfolds, he takes to playing truant from the office, wandering dreamily around the neighbourhood with his briefcase, shirt and tie, before forging a close companionship with the lonely housewife in the downstairs apartment. Their relationship is at first purely platonic, as they visit pachinko parlours and coffee shops together, and even go out dancing in nightclubs in the evenings. The friendship adds a glimmer of hope to their woeful existences, but as the story progresses, even this delicate harmony finds itself destroyed by misunderstanding and jealousy.

References to the director Yasujiro Ozu from Western observers trying to define some intrinsic Japanese aesthetic in the works of certain filmmakers have become so commonplace as to be almost trite. The studied formalism, for example, of Takeshi Kitano's yakuza films has often found itself compared to that of the grand master of the domestic drama. In Toshiki Satô's case however, such a comparison (although I am

not entirely sure whether it has been made before) does carry a certain weight. One similarity is that the best examples of Satô's character-driven and humanistic films centre on the humdrum problems of the middle classes, and hints that their dilemmas are a function of the times in which they exist.

Ozu's films, as his biographer Donald Richie so often stresses, are not about the family itself, but its dissolution – the breakdown of the domestic unit caught in the flux between the conflicting forces of traditionalism and modernity which marked the post-war period in which he made so many of his most typical works. The problems his families face are representative of those of society at large. Generations clash, unwedded daughters are passed off selflessly, but not without regret, by doting fathers in arranged marriage agreements, and office workers are sent away from their loved ones by their companies in order to receive promotion. The films often end on the very same scenes or images with which they began: nothing appears to have changed by their coda, but at the heart everything has, and yet life must go on. Richie refers to the Japanese term *mono no aware* as being at the core of Ozu's films; a recognition of the transience of life and all its episodes, and a gentle sadness at their passing. Satô's films too rarely end in forced climaxes or tidy resolutions, leaving the impression that his characters will go on living the same lives long after the running time has elapsed.

It would be perverse to elevate Satô's exercises in the pink genre to the same canon of Ozu's finest. The directors were working under radically different circumstances after all. But there are further parallels in style and approach that might be made, even if they are not intentional and the characters' plights are borne out of markedly different social circumstances. After all, Satô's tales reflect a different era, the Heisei Period, in which everything the previous generations had striven for has been achieved, and yet as the new generation struggles to maintain this comfortable standard of living against ever diminishing returns, happiness seems more elusive than ever. In the late-capitalistic society in which the average Tokyo-ite exists, time and space are quite literally money, and the promise of white-collar employment offers neither independence nor a chance to better oneself, but rigid, office-bound, mind-numbing routine. Nor are the characters concerned about the future wellbeing of their offspring. Indeed, they have none, spending their lives putting off such a future until a time when it will be convenient for them. The idea of community is dead, with the people who share the same cramped tenement blocks rarely more than strangers. There are no neighbouring housewives proffering a cheery 'Ohayo!' in the morning. The home is instead a virtual prison for women, and their husbands are as distant to them as aliens. It is the abandoned vacant apartment of

Empty Room that acts as the neutral zone where the tenement denizens go to find a sense of emotional space. How to survive this modern-day existence and retain a sense of humour and humanity are the basic questions posed in Satô's films, but like Ozu's they don't attempt to provide easy answers.

If we continue to push the analogy, we might note that, though Satô's films do not quite possess the pictorial elegance of Ozu's (which of course, were made under considerably different production circumstances during the heyday of the Japanese studio system), his controlled use of image composition and edits nevertheless do aspire to the same goals – to portray humans trapped by a rigid cage of social convention. Ozu famously eschewed any camera movement at all in his films, treating his characters as pictorial elements imprisoned within the frame so that, according to Richie, "The presentation was so arranged that it heightened the humanity of his characters... Composition was extraordinarily important and it is almost Mondrian-like, a square abstraction, so that the people can be seen as more vagrant, more curved, more discursive, in this inhuman matrix of right angles. Then you can see the frailty of the human beings."³⁶² Ironically, Satô's camera is not only considerably more mobile than Ozu's, but also more than most other pink film directors. That said, his interior scenes, in *Empty Room* for example, are framed so as to emphasise the human elements among the cluttered cramped spaces and jagged hard angles of their living environment. In the scene described earlier, as Sachiko's husband sits down in the room next to the one where she is folding clothes, the camera keeps a wide angle so that we can observe the two simultaneously, the frame divided by the partition wall as she finishes off her chores and he glugs thirstily from his can of beer. Though we can see them both, they remain invisible to one another, their detached emotional relationship indicated by the positions they inhabit on either side of the frame.

Satô's dialogue scenes often consciously isolate his characters in static frontal medium close-ups à la Ozu; their awkward exchanges governed by a stiff, almost Pavlovian adherence to etiquette that belies the stifled heart beneath. While Ozu would have left their inner feelings unspoken, here courteous bows and everyday platitudes in some films come accompanied by interior voiceovers or subtitles containing their issuers' true thoughts, emphasising the huge gulf between what the Japanese refer to as *honne*, or true feelings, and *tatemae*, the 'front' or façade that one puts up in social interactions – like the British stiff upper lip.

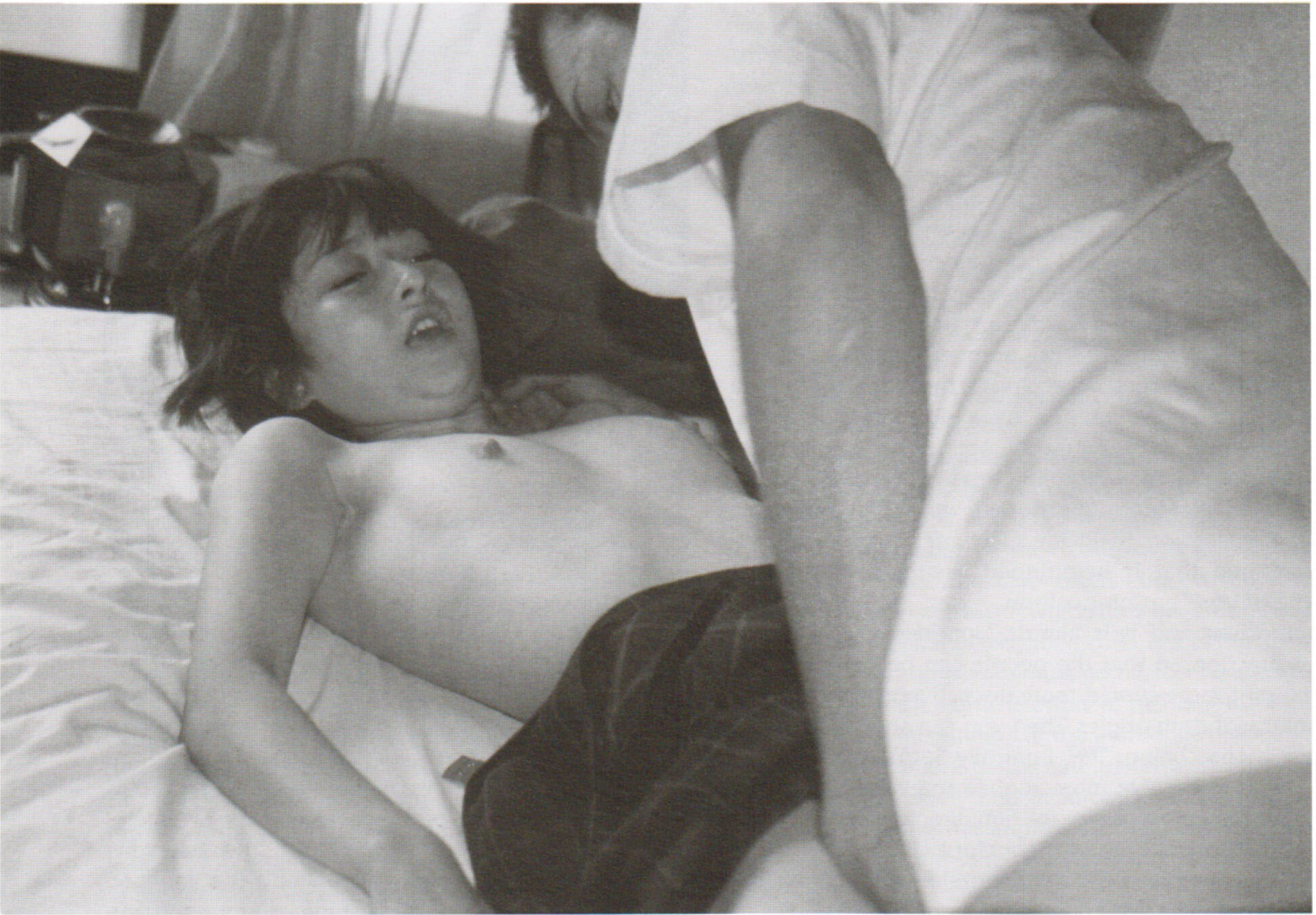
One can also detect this gap between inner emotions and outward appearances between the lines of dialogue. The scripts Toshiki Satô shoots from are incredibly well-written, with every line bouncing back and forth to add a new and unpredictable spin on the



above: Toshiki Satô's most well-known film, *Tandem* (1994). ©Kokuei/Shintoho

one before, fleshing out the characters yet repeatedly pulling the rug out from under the viewer's feet as to where the conversation is heading, not unlike the scripts of Ozu and his regular screenwriting collaborator Kôgo Noda. While emphasising the stiltedness of the speakers' attempts to relate to one another, these resulting crossed wires and misunderstandings are played with tongue firmly planted in cheek.

The meeting of the two male characters that sets in motion the narrative of *Tandem* occurs in a barely-furnished coffee shop at midnight. The paunchy, middle-aged car salesman Kazuma and the younger, scooter-riding Shinichi both sit studiously ignoring one another, sipping their coffees, smoking cigarettes and gazing blankly into space, while their back-stories are revealed in a series of flashbacks representing their inner musings and memories. Shinichi has just stormed out on his girlfriend, having forced himself roughly upon her after discovering she is having an affair. Kazuma is lost in his own private fantasies, barely able to contain his excitement after having just performed his first ever act of train groping – the film was pitched as an entry in the *Molester Train* series, with its original title of *Molester Train Married Wife Edition: Wife Is a Pervert*.³⁶³ When the chance to strike up a conversation materialises as Shinichi runs out of cigarettes, Kazuma latches onto the younger man, and ends up hitching a joyride on the back of his scooter, refusing to let go of him as they travel back to the Chiba suburbs where Shinichi hopes to patch things up with his girlfriend. (The Japanese have a great expression for this sort of behaviour; clinging on like *kingyo no fun*, or 'goldfish shit'). The film adopts a road movie structure as they travel through the night together, the barely-responsive Shinichi becoming increasingly irked at the older man's babbling attempts at bonhomie, while flashbacks reveal that the philandering Kazuma has left his wife in the same suburban neighbourhood that Shinichi comes from, so as to shack up with a younger mistress in an apartment in Tokyo.



above: The erotic act de-eroticised: Nikki Sasaki's matter-of-fact deflowering in *The Lost Virgin* (2002). ©Kokuei/Shintoho

Tandem provides many fine examples of the “ellipses and digression” cited by the critic Fukuma, including one comically staged set piece where Shinichi's scooter finds itself on a collision course with a pushbike at a traffic intersection. It is typical of Satô's approach, in which incidents are leapfrogged over in favour of their implications to achieve a pared-down continuity without any unnecessary links. This focusing on the before and after lends the stories a compelling air of unpredictability, with not a single redundant scene or line of dialogue. The viewer, too, is kept actively involved as they are dumped into the middle of scenes without knowing how they really got there.³⁶⁴

Marking the debut of Nikki Sasaki – the younger sister of Yumeka – *The Lost Virgin* follows the life and loves of Chisato over three summers separated by five-year intervals as she tries to balance her hunger for new sexual adventures with attempts to be something more than just an object or appendage to the guys she becomes involved with. The film, whose subtitle, *Yamitsuki enjo kôsai*,³⁶⁵ translates to something like ‘resigning oneself to compensated dating’, charts Chisato's course from virginal schoolgirl to bored Office Lady to a seemingly contented member of staff at a

gyûdon (beef bowl) fast-food restaurant. The film opens with the text ‘Ten Years Before’, as the viewer is first introduced to our young unsullied protagonist, clad in her baggy school uniform, in the middle of an exchange between a smartly-dressed white-collar stiff. The two are standing facing one another expectantly in a Love Hotel bedroom as part of a paid date arranged via a *tel-club* (*terekura*) phone dating service. After discussing payment, her prospective partner immediately slaps a pair of handcuffs on her, explaining that it is because “virgins go too wild the first time.” Fortunately, she manages to make her getaway from this ruffian, minus her shoes, and is rescued by classmate Takashi, who takes her under his wing, removes her handcuffs, lends her his trainers and later rather unceremoniously relieves her of her virginity. Chisato immediately celebrates her arrival into the adult world by visiting a karaoke booth with her schoolgirl buddy Mari, where they both sing the film's nonsensically-titled “furu furu” theme song.³⁶⁶ She is later left pining on the sidelines, however, when she discovers that Takashi already has a girlfriend, named Hikari.

These characters all pop up in each of the successive episodes, the highs and lows of each of their lives

counter-pointing Chisato's emotional journey. Next time they meet, Takashi and Hikari are married with a four-year-old daughter, but now working as a barman, Takashi seems reluctant to settle down. Good-time girlfriend Mari's efforts to lead Chisato astray meet little resistance, though their frolicking threesome with a stranger in a motel room ends in a long, tired walk back home and leads, fairly understandably, to Chisato's break-up with her cohabiting boyfriend. Slight but sprightly, *The Lost Virgin* takes all its best attributes from those of its lead actress, Nikki Sasaki, with her rasping, husky voice, her elastically expressive face and her wiry frame kitted out in clothes one size too large for her. The film ends on a poignant note, with Takashi and Chisato making a return visit to the now-abandoned bedroom where she was set off on her sexual odyssey. "I wonder what will happen in the future," Takashi muses. "About what?" she replies. "To Japan." "That's right. We've got a long time ahead of us."

Throughout his career, Satô has been particularly well-blessed by his collaborations with some of the genre's most talented screenwriters. Both *Empty Room* and *The Lost Virgin* were written by Shinji Imaoka, now among the most highly-regarded figures working in the pink industry, but the initial impetus to Satô's wider recognition came from the figure of Masahiro Kobayashi, who started his career writing television dramas as well as erotic films. Born in Tokyo in 1954, after various jobs as a folk singer and a postal worker, Kobayashi penned the script for Satô's debut, *Dream Woman*, in 1989, as well as early films such as *Abnormal Ecstasy* (1991), *Adulterous Wife's Sex: Pleasure Hunting* (1992), *Tandem*, and the majority of the *Apartment Wife* titles. Kobayashi is to Toshiki Satô what Shirô Yumeno is to Hisayasu Satô and Kishû Izuchi is to Takahisa Zeze (note that Sano writes his own scripts), and like these fellow unsung heroes of the pink new wave, his work has not been confined to the sex film genre.

In fact, Kobayashi is now a fairly prominent director in his own right, at least on the international arthouse scene. Four of his titles have aired at the Cannes film festival: *Bootleg Film* (1999), on which Mitsuru Meike was assistant director, and the Hokkaido-set drama *Man Walking on Snow* were both presented in the Un Certain Regard section in 1999 and 2001 respectively; *Film Noir* was included as part of the Directors' Fortnight in 2000; and *Bashing*, the controversial story of an aid worker returning to Japan to near universal condemnation after being freed as a hostage in Iraq, screened in competition in 2005. Unlike most other figures to emerge from this world however, Kobayashi seems somewhat uneasy about his sex film background. His biography in the Cannes festival catalogues and on his own Monkey Town website³⁶⁷ omits any mention of his pink film work, making much instead of his position as a "former assistant director of François Truffaut" – though this seems something of an embellishment of

the truth for his potential viewers in France, as Truffaut actually turned him down for this job.

Ironically, Kobayashi's more adventurous film-making pursuits have not particularly endeared him to local critics, possibly due to statements such as the one that accompanied the screening of *Bashing* in France: "Japan is a village society. If one of the villagers steps out of line, he is the victim of massive ostracism, an outcast. When the hostage-takings occurred in Iraq, the victims' families suffered in isolation for a matter of collective responsibility."³⁶⁸ In fact, they are rather less well-regarded than his scripts for sex films, which he has not only written for the director Satô; he also contributed scripts for the two *Sky Blue Crayon* films, directed by Toshiya Ueno and released to pink theatres in 1998 and 1999 as *Nurse and Married Woman: The Lustful Sister-in-Law* and *The Lustful Sister-in-Law 2: Erotic Games* respectively, and himself directed a solitary pink title in 2000, *One Week: Lust Diary*. This is a day-by-day account of a young man and woman, played by Hotaru Hazuki and Yôta Kawase, after they meet in a bar and return to spend the rest of the film in the man's apartment in a self-destructive frenzy of lust, like a 21st Century *In the Realm of the Senses*. Outside of the pink industry, Kobayashi also wrote and directed the fifth entry in the *Perfect Education* series of mainstream erotic movies, entitled *Amazing Story* (2003).

Though Kobayashi seems eager to put the world of the pink film behind him, Toshiki Satô doesn't seem in any danger of straying too far from his roots. Towards the end of the '90s, he did make a number of films for non-pink markets. As well as his V-cinema productions – both in the erotic and the gangster-action genres, such as the two *Fighting Dragon Story* movies in 1995 – he has also realised a handful of more ambitious projects. These include the Kobayashi-scripted *Lunatic* (1996), which portrayed a tempestuous love-triangle between two squabbling brothers and an emotionally unstable actress, and *I Am Juice* (1996), a lesbian melodrama based on the novel of the same name by Hiroshi Nobue, produced by Fuji Television as part of their 'Forbidden' (*marukin*) series of theatrical features that also included Ryûichi Hiroki's *Midori*. In 2002, his attempt with Kobayashi at a more faithful re-adaptation of Yoshikaze Takeuchi's novel *Yume nara samete* (Wake Up If It's a Dream), which had formed the basis for Satoshi Kon's revolutionary anime *Perfect Blue* (1997), failed to ignite at the box office. In 2005, he directed *Sumo Hot Pot*, a comedy based on the real-life story of how Hiroshima University's sumo club was resuscitated through the participation of some women and a handful of skinny foreign students. But despite these forays, Satô remains closer to Kokuei than any of the others, staying on hand to assist the younger directors in mounting their own new productions and contributing a new pink title once every couple of years. Even though his output has slowed down considerably from the mid-'90s, a new pink film from Toshiki Satô is always a highly anticipated event.

Transcendental Nightmares: Takahisa Zeze

Talking individually with each of the *shitennô*, one comes away with the impression (though the others may deny it) that it was Takahisa Zeze who was the main driving force behind the Pink Nouvelle Vague. The theory gains more credence when it's noted that Zeze's films were the ones presented at the first Biographies of New Japanese Artists of Principle event, followed by those of the other directors over the course of 1994. In terms of progressing on to a career outside of *pinku eiga* – a field to which he still makes sporadic returns – Zeze is thought of as Kokuei's great success story. Poised, articulate and blessed with an acid wit, he is afforded an almost god-like degree of reverence by the company's current staff.

And yet one can't help but wonder how it was that such a character came to be involved in the underworld of sex film production in the first place. Born in 1960 in Ōita prefecture in Kyūshū, Zeze is a graduate of Kyoto University, the country's second most highly ranked academic institution, boasting several Nobel Prize-winners among its alumni. Put simply, it hardly seems a likely environment in which prospective sex film directors are spawned.

But then Zeze's films are just as hard to get a handle on as his personality, not least because his body of work is not only as large as that of his contemporaries, but is also far more varied in its scope and ambition. Zeze has demonstrated a willingness to experiment and plot his own course from within the pink genre that has set him apart from his peers. Furthermore, he has been the most successful in bridging the gap between the *seijin eiga* and the arthouse markets, to the extent that his later films for Kokuei, including *Raigyo* (1997), *Dirty Maria* (1998), *Tokyo X Erotica* (2001) and *Crevice of Skin* (2004), were released simultaneously as pink films and as 'independent' productions in cinemas such as Eurospace.

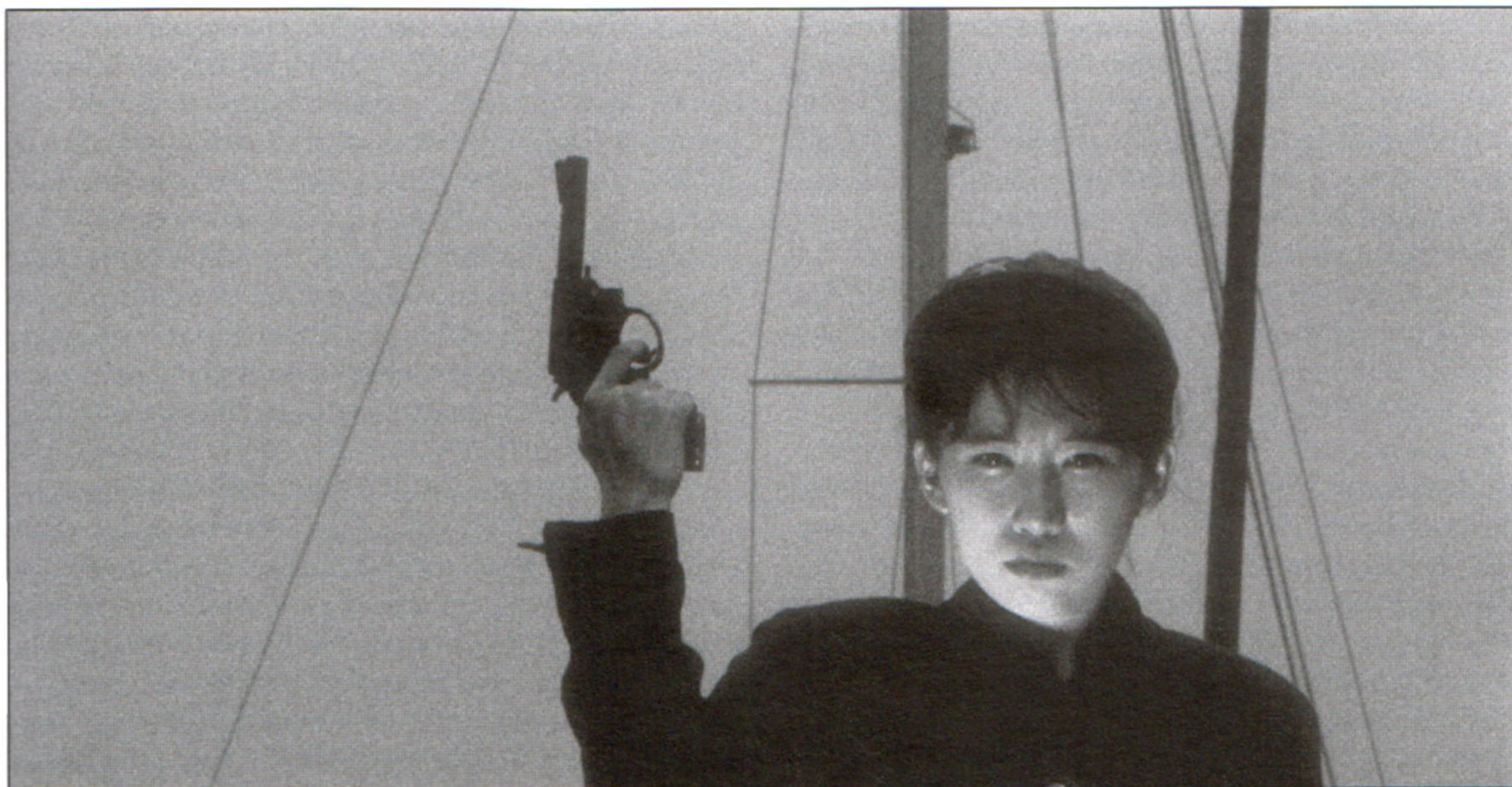
Indeed, segregating Zeze's work into the pink and non-pink spheres is pointless, as over the years he has leapt between genres and individual production circumstances with consummate ease. Outside of *pinku eiga* his films have ranged from such extremes as *Dog Star* (2002) – an unlikely romantic comedy in which a blind man killed in a traffic accident returns to grant his guide dog the wish of becoming a human in order to embark on a romance with his former trainer – to working on a documentary produced as part of Fuji TV's 2005 series *End of War 60th Anniversary Project* (*Shūsen 60-nen Kikaku*), entitled *Illusionary Special Attack Base: The Battle Is Not Over Yet*, which explored the murky history of the suicidal *tokkōtai* pilots (commonly referred to in the West as *kamikaze*). Between these two poles lie films like *Kokkuri* (1997) –

a high school horror amalgam of *Witchboard* (1986) and *Don't Look Now* (1973) that preceded the international J-horror epidemic sparked off by Hideo Nakata's *Ring* (1998) – and *Secret Journey* (2004), focusing on a mysterious androgynous young man who disappears into thin air after the capturing the attention of the story's filmmaker-narrator (played by Ken Mitsuishi). (*Secret Journey* was produced by Eurospace and the closely-affiliated Film School of Tokyo (Eiga Bigakkō) as part of a collection of eleven digital features directed by a mixture of students and established professionals and which all screened at the cinema under the 'Banchō' label.³⁶⁹)

As Zeze himself explains, "It's not really one particular type of film I'm making. I just like doing new things. What I like to do is something I haven't done before, both inside and outside of the pink genre, mainstream or whatever. Some of my mainstream films look like my pink films and some of my pink films seem more mainstream than others. I tend to shoot pink and mainstream alternately, so when they are lined up together, my body of work seems to have a slightly confused look, or my films appear to have a strange alignment with one another."³⁷⁰

Rather than let his directorial personality be subsumed by the material, beneath the often elliptical surface of his films, the dark shadow of an underlying *modus operandi* is discernable to those who look closely. But while it is safe to say the Zeze's films are highly individualistic and look like no other filmmaker's, it is never more clear why the Four Devils met such resistance in the first place, than when watching his pink work. They not only hold back on the very pleasures one associates with the genre, they also maddeningly withstand easy interpretation, often coming across as deliberately esoteric and oblique. Even those who champion Zeze's more abstruse exercises will concede that to understand them wholly and to feel moved by them are two entirely different things.

During his university years in the '80s – a decade during which mainstream domestic cinema was at its most staid and unadventurous – Zeze's viewing habits tended towards "more experimental or challenging" works, including left-of-centre documentaries like those of Shinsuke Ogawa's collective (who recorded the violent clashes surrounding the construction of Narita International Airport during the late-'60s and early '70s), and those of Shōhei Imamura's protégé Kazuo Hara (who himself first began working as an assistant director in pink films),³⁷¹ like *Extreme Private Eros: Love Song 1974* and *The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On* (1987).³⁷² One can surmise that such titles mirrored the same intellectual concerns with national



above: Takahisa Zeze's provocative debut, *Extracurricular Lesson: Violent Assault*, goes by the alternative titles of *Go to Haneda and You Will See Kids Who Have Become Pirates*, *Waiting to Depart*, and *Good Luck Japan!* ©Kokuei/Shintoho

identity and landscape that worked their way into Zeze's later films (as well as those of many of his non-pink contemporaries like Shinji Aoyama and Naomi Kawase), not to mention a cynical distrust of officially sanctioned notions of history and culture.

Around this time, Zeze directed several independent *jishu eiga*, including *Shonenban Shibôjô: Kunisada, Kyôto, Hirota* (1982) on 8mm, and the 28-minute *Gang! Is the Sky Clearing Over There?* (1985) on 16mm.³⁷³ But the most pressing issue for a filmmaker of his generation was how to get his work more widely seen. And so it was through his frequent visits to local pink theatres during his undergraduate years that Zeze first saw the potential to do something interesting within this untapped medium. Following his graduation, in 1986 Zeze joined Shishi Pro and began working under Hisayasu Satô, initially assisting on three films for the gay market – *Temptation of a Mask* (1987), *Muscle* (1989) and *Intoxication Game* (1989) – while starting to write scripts, mainly for the director Shûji Kataoka, from 1988 onwards.

By the end of the decade he had made his first pink film, most commonly known under the rather verbose title of *Go to Haneda and You Will See Kids Who Have Become Pirates Waiting to Depart*. Focusing on an underclass of Asian immigrants illicitly eking out their existence on the fringes of Tokyo's one-time main airport, this dramatic tale features a *zainichi* named Kingyo (played with characteristic zeal by Kazuhiro Sano) who invokes the ire of a local yakuza group with his efforts to send a Taiwanese prostitute (or *Japa-yuki*, the term used to refer to girls drawn by the high value of the yen from neighbouring countries to work in

Japan's sex industry) named Yan (Mami Ogawa) back to her home country.³⁷⁴

The viewer's entry point into this mixed-race imbroglio comes by way of Momo, a delinquent Japanese schoolgirl played by Sayoko Nakajima, who is first seen three days before her graduation leaning bored against the airport's perimeter wire fence, before she is curb-crawled by a man whom it later transpires is one of her teachers. (This character, incidentally, already appears in Zeze's 16mm *Gang! Is the Sky Clearing Over There?*, and later appeared in the 1989 pink film *Blue Sky*, thus forming an informal 'Momo' trilogy.)³⁷⁵ He whisks her away to a secluded spot to indulge in a bout of car sex, but before he is able to indulge in his quasi-incestuous fantasies, he is interrupted by the sudden appearance, at the vehicle's window, of a young man taking Polaroid snapshots. It immediately becomes clear that Momo is in cahoots with the blackmailer, known as Johnny, and after extorting money from their luckless victim, they both flee the scene to a small, battered boat anchored in a tiny nearby inlet and captained by their partner-in-crime, Rekishi. It is during their flight that they encounter Kingyo and become dragged into the interracial conflict.

Though known alternatively as *Good Luck Japan!* – the final words of one of the Korean sex workers before she turns a pistol on her head and blows her brain out – the original pink release title of *Extracurricular Lesson: Violent Assault* seems peculiarly apt in this instance, and not just on the level of the jailbait fantasy provided by its main character Momo. The overt and polemical presentation of the violent

schisms between *nihonjin* (Japanese) and *gaikokujin* (foreigner) that existed, all but unacknowledged at a public level, must not only have seemed akin to something of an assault on its viewers. It was also an aspect of the modern nation that was as imperceptible within the mainstream media as it was in the school curriculum.³⁷⁶

The Haneda setting is critical in lending context to the events that unfold within the film. At one time Japan's aerial gateway to the outside world, before it was replaced by Narita in 1978, Haneda is now used almost exclusively for interior flights, but at the time Zeze made his film, services to Seoul and Taipei were still in operation. Zeze frames his scenes in a variety of fascinating locations that are symbolic of his characters' plight as sex workers performing the most debasing and thankless position within Japan's service-based economy. Remaining captive and invisible within the nation's borders, his *Japa-yuki* are grounded in an industrial wasteland encaged beneath a girdle of motorway flyovers and monorail tracks that

provide the ordinary Japanese citizen with a freer means of mobility.³⁷⁷ The familiar motifs of perimeter fences and the hum of low-flying airplanes are omnipresent, while one stand-off between the yakuza and the Korean gang occurs in the concrete trench of a dried-up canal. Zeze was later to pursue his envisioning of the area in a 1996 documentary for MX-TV, entitled *The Memory of Water: Private Landscapes of Haneda*, whose very title points to another aspect of Zeze's work – crucial to films like *Dream of Garuda*, *Raigyo* and *Gap in the Skin* – which is the symbolic role of the element of water.

Zeze would later revisit the issue of racial discrimination in a more allegorical fashion in two non-pink features. The first was the low budget sci-fi comedy *SF Whip Cream* (2002), in which the illegal aliens are of the extra-terrestrial type (the film's intentionally cheapjack locations and special effects were inspired by the futuristic Soviet political satire *Kin-Dza-Dza*, directed by Georgi Daneliya in 1986). He also managed to shoehorn a degree of social commentary



above: Moe Sakura as the cold-blooded murderess in Takahisa Zeze's shocking *Raigyo* (1997).
©Kokuei/Shintoho

into the glossy teen sci-fi movie *Moon Child* (2003), in which Zeze's bizarre appointment as gun-for-hire director represents his only major studio work to date. A popular vehicle for the rock idols HYDE (formerly frontman for the quasi-grunge band L'Arc-en-Ciel) and Gackt (ex-singer for Malice Mizer), *Moon Child* reverses the concept of marginalised Asians living illegally in Japan to that of a group of marginalised Japanese renegades hiding out in a fictional futuristic city on the Asian mainland, named Maleppa, following Japan's economic collapse in the opening decades of the 21st Century.³⁷⁸ Though Gackt is credited for originating the story of this otherwise silly tale about a space age vampire and his chums, the input of Zeze and his regular script collaborator Kishû Izuchi is clearly evident.

Go to Haneda represents one of Zeze's most straightforward and polemical articulations of his attitudes towards the modern state of the nation. In general his work is more meditative in nature, and often features desperate and alienated individuals roaming aimlessly through deadened or decaying landscapes: one recalls the drab industrial suburbs of *Dream of Garuda* (1994), or the sickly contaminated marshlands of *Raigyo* (1997). His characters appear in limbo, in search of an ever-elusive sense of connection with their fellow humans, be it through sex or acts of extreme violence.

If one has to isolate recurring motifs in his later works, ones that immediately spring to the fore are the preoccupation with karma and fate, and it is also worth observing that Zeze's plots often use real-life murders gleaned from sensationalised tabloid reports or TV talk shows as their starting points, with typically only the most basic facts of the cases adhered to. Less concerned with symptoms than underlying causes, Zeze is not so overly concerned with exploring or explaining the motives of those involved. These incidents are primarily adopted as the basis for more mythical, soul-searching trawls into the dark psyche of contemporary Japan, with context given more emphasis than hard conclusions. As Zeze explains, "In the '90s in Japan as a whole there was a feeling of crisis. First there was the economic slump, then the Kobe earthquake, the gas attack on the Tokyo subway, several murder cases involving young people and so on... I and maybe also the other directors were trying to fight something. There was the sense that there was an enemy that had to be fought against. That was a very strong motivation for all of us, this wish to look for topics that allowed us to relate to all these problems happening around us."³⁷⁹

Few of Zeze's films reflect this prevalent feeling of pre-millennial angst better than *Raigyo*, based on an incident that occurred in a rural part of Chiba prefecture in March 1988. In the film, a young woman named Noriko discharges herself from the hospital

where she is being treated for a chronic pancreatic disorder, and later brutally stabs a stranger to death in the shower room of a Love Hotel. From the beginning, Zeze's fictional reconstruction unfolds hypnotically, almost wordlessly, with the viewer kept as little more than a passive witness during the slow foreboding build-up, in which the details of both murderess and victim are revealed through only the subtlest of clues. Noriko, inscrutable, morose and dressed in black (the film's pink release bore the subtitle *The Woman in the Black Underwear*) throws away her wedding ring at a deserted gas station. During her makeover at a hairdresser, and her several unsuccessful attempts to make contact from a solitary phone box with a man whom we later learn is her husband and is conducting an affair with another woman, we catch glimpses of a photo of a baby girl in her handbag, lying alongside a vicious looking knife. Noriko's frantic efforts at making phone contact are mirrored by those of Yanai, a sleazy sexual predator who, after phoning in sick to his workplace, wanders aimlessly from payphone to payphone in the forbidding outlying zones of the heavily industrialised town location, leafing through his address book for the numbers of former sexual conquests while his wife lies in hospital, heavily pregnant with his child. After a series of missed calls the twin paths of the two strangers finally converge, with fatal results, when they make contact through a *tel-club* dating service.

Raigyo's title refers to a type of fish originally introduced from Taiwan, the snakehead mullet, known for its peculiar flesh-eating habits during the spawning season and inedible flesh due to the parasitic worms that it carries. In the opening shots we see several being hauled from the surrounding swampland by a sullen gas station attendant, played by Takeshi Itô, who subsidises the meagre income from his day job by selling his fish to local restaurants. After discarding one of his worthless catch, he douses it in petrol and sets it on fire. This fishy symbolism is evoked on several subsequent occasions, as another one of the fish skulls around in a bucket at the gas station where Itô works, and later, more metaphorically, in the image of one floating in a metallic basin which becomes flooded with blood in the Love Hotel bathroom.

The atmosphere of contamination is all-pervasive, and not just through the imagery of the *raigyo*. The bleak, marshy landscapes of the industrial no-man's-land that surround the town of Omigawa where the film is set, are shot in a jaundiced sepia tone, occasionally turning to cold greenish-greys. The warm lighting of the dingy motel bedroom interior contrasts with the violently lit blood-red tiles of its bathroom where the murder takes place. As Noriko disposes of Yanai's body afterwards, the sky streaked with ominous dark clouds mingled with black smoke

billowing from the smoke stacks on the horizon, she breaks down in tears under the delayed shock of her crime after discovering the gift-wrapped package of baby clothes Yanai bought earlier for his wife.

Raigyo represents the crowning achievement of Kôichi Saitô, arguably the most accomplished cinematographer currently working in the pink film industry. Though the work of background creative staff, such as cameramen, musicians, editors and scriptwriters, so often goes unrecognised in a culture of film criticism in which the director is too often seen as the sole agent in bringing a particular vision to the screen, Saitô's role in assisting Zeze to achieve his aims is particularly worthy of attention, especially when one considers the phenomenally short shooting schedules and low budgets on which such projects are realised. Though he has been active shooting both pink films and erotic straight-to-video titles since the early '80s, working with virtually all of the directors at Kokuei who immediately preceded and succeeded the Four Devils, it is Saitô's work for this director in particular that shines the brightest, and his input is especially noticeable in films such as *Dirty Maria* and *Crevice of Skin*.

Raigyo was actually produced on a larger budget than the typical pink production, and marks something of a high-water mark for the pink renaissance of the '90s. Released simultaneously as a pink and an art film, the picture nevertheless proved too austere and violent to be wholly successful in either market, and with only the scantest amount of sex, many *seijin eiga* theatres declined to book it (given the sheer bloodletting verve of its pivotal scene, it might surprise Western viewers to learn that Eirin awarded it an R-15 rating as opposed to the R-18 adult film certificate). Part of the reason may also be attributable to its unconventional dramatic structure (at least by mainstream standards), another conspicuous aspect of much of Zeze's work. With the false climax provided by the murder coming exactly at the film's midpoint, and with no sudden dramatic resolutions offered by the subsequent scenes in which Kazuhiro Sano's police investigator finds himself unable to uncover any adequate motive for the crime and Itô's gas station attendant adopts a more central role as Noriko's confessor, the denouement might be considered something of a comedown by those seeking conventional narrative closure.

In this respect, *Raigyo* is not an atypical work for the director. His films often feature cathartic explosions of violence in the early scenes before charting the perpetrator's journey for spiritual absolution. When couched in Buddhist terms of regeneration and rebirth, such ideas can be especially perplexing for Western viewers, but they are so central to Zeze's work, it is worth drawing further attention to them. His preoccupation with the theme can be

detected in the very titles of the films *End of the World* (1995) – which closes with a screen of text containing the film's title enigmatically replaced with "The beginning of..." – and the tellingly-titled video essay made outside of the pink genre, *If I Were Reborn*, from 1996. Even in such an apparently mainstream film as the romantic comedy *Dog Star* reincarnation plays an obvious role, while elsewhere it is utilised to more cryptic effect, such as in the Möbius-strip-like construction of *The Cicada That Chirps through the Night* (1995), a film based on a real event in which a flirtatious Office Lady was murdered by the janitor of the building where she worked.

Another typical work in relation to this theme is *Dream of Garuda*. The title of this earlier pink film, from 1994, alludes to a bird-headed deity of Hindu mythology. Garuda is personified by the main character of Ikuo (Takeshi Itô), a lowly worker in a paper collection and recycling depot who, along with his older colleague Tomimori, instigates a violent rape and theft on a single young woman named Mieko, who lives alone in a drab tenement block. Freshly released from prison several years later, Ikuo's first port of call is a soapland, a place where naked young women offer sensual body-to-body massages in lieu of full-blown intercourse. Here his attendant appears to be a dead ringer for the girl he sexually assaulted several years ago, yet she insists she has never met him before. Confronted by Mieko's face in every woman he encounters, Ikuo increasingly begins to lose any sense of reality and finds himself driven to attack a further two women. When he confronts Mieko one last time, she reveals that she is now working as a prostitute for Tomimori, who managed to flee the scene of the original crime for which Ikuo was jailed. As Mieko beseeches Ikuo to help liberate her from her pimp, Ikuo is led to see in her one last chance for redemption.

Dream of Garuda melds esoteric references to the historical role of Shinto – the native belief system that was disestablished as a state religion by the occupation following the war – with a fragmentary, solipsistic narrative, measured pacing and all the slippery acrobatics of the soapland scenes that one might expect from a film originally released as the fourth part of a series called *High Class Soap Technique*. Indeed, the film's loftier conceits about spiritual purification as doled out to its protagonist by his deft and servile redeemer might just as easily be seen as a façade for the film's true intentions in the same manner that the real-life soapland 'massage' parlours have functioned as a front for illegal sex-for-cash services following Japan's ostensible abolition of prostitution in the '50s (such places offer rather more than a quick scrub and rinse down).³⁸⁰ Artsy slow-motion images of swarming birds, blown up from 8mm film stock, accompanied by the sound of

squawks and fluttering wings, work their way into the film to form a metaphor that may well be lost on those not *au fait* with the source mythos, as typically the film reveals all manner of layers and inferences that will pass by unnoticed by many. Ikuo is in fact a modern-day embodiment of an *aragami*, literally a 'wild god' – an ill-meaning vengeful spirit who has died while holding a grudge – while the film makes clear references to the myth of Prince Yamato Takeru, recounted in the oldest surviving books in the Japanese language and the sources of many of the nation's legends, the *Record of Ancient Matters*, or *Kojiki* (A.D. 712) and the *Chronicles of Japan*, or *Nihon Shoki* (A.D. 720). The legendary folk hero, believed to be the son of an emperor born sometime in the early centuries of the Yamato period (circa A.D. 250–710) died somewhere in the Ise Province after an epic quest while fighting against the enemies of the Yamato dynasty. In the legend, Yamato Takeru's soul transformed into a white bird and flew back to the Yamato land, just as in the film Ikuo becomes a bird after climbing up a chimney and leaping, thereby implying an oblique reference to the *tennô* system that his mythical model died fighting to uphold. Meanwhile, more than just a descendent of the medieval *yuna*, or bath-house prostitute, the character of Mieko can also be interpreted as a modern-day version of the ancient *saigu* – virgin priestesses drawn from the Japanese Imperial Family who exclusively served at the Ise Shrine, the most important and holiest of sites of the Shinto religion, and thus the highest sanctuary of the *tennô* state. Viewers are left to draw their own conclusions about what Zeze might mean by all this, but as we have seen, the motif of the Imperial line personified as a violent rapist is not an entirely unfamiliar one within the Japanese pink film.³⁸¹

While, on a superficial level, *Dream of Garuda* might be easily dismissed as porn dressed up as art, its pseudonymous screenwriting credit to Saburô Rakan does at least point to a method behind the lubricious love-making scenes. The word *Rakan* (or *Arakan*) in Japanese Buddhism refers to a disciple who has attained the highest state of Nirvana – the elimination of all human desires and concepts of the individual self – leaving nothing left to learn. It is derived from the Sanskrit term *Arihan*, comprised of words *ari* (enemy), *han* (slay), and is a concept shared by all practitioners of Buddhism (in Chinese the word is pronounced Lohan).³⁸² Is it also any more than a coincidence that 'rakan', when written in the phonetic script of *katakana*, is the Japanese spelling for the French writer and psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (1901–81)? Lacan was one of the key figures, alongside Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, associated with the post-structuralist movement, defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as, "An

extension and critique of structuralism, esp. as used in critical textual analysis, in which the concepts of representation are questioned, and which is therefore characterised by an emphasis on plurality and deferral of meaning."³⁸³ As a means of literary criticism just as applicable to cinema, it rejects the idea of a text having one single meaning, its interpretation depending on the cultural background, experience and psychological makeup of the individual reader.

Whether this double-pun was intended or not is a moot point, but it is certain that a man of Zeze's educational background would have been familiar with such works as Barthes's *The Death of the Author*, and he would not have been alone. As the forename of this screenwriting pseudonym suggests,³⁸⁴ the script for *Dream of Garuda* was in fact the work of three men, with Zeze joined for the first time by regular collaborator Kishû Izuchi, and also by one of contemporary Japanese cinema's most thoughtful and articulate directors, Shinji Aoyama. The recipient of the International Federation of Film Critics (FIPRESCI) award at the 2000 Cannes Film Festival for his monochrome arthouse epic *Eureka*, Aoyama is also known as an especially perceptive film theorist and critic (he wrote frequently for the now-defunct *Cahiers du Cinema Japon* during the '90s). Aoyama's earlier directorial work was primarily based in popular genres such as yakuza movies (*Chinpira*, 1996), police thrillers (*An Obsession*, 1997), horror (*EM: Embalming*, 1999), and romantic drama (*Shady Grove*, 1999). In fact, he made his directing debut in the softcore sex film genre, with the straight-to-video high school sex comedy *Not in the Textbook!* the year after *Dream of Garuda* was released. But, like Zeze, Aoyama has never felt constrained by the concept of genre, instead using it as a framework to explore the relationship between fiction and reality.

Aoyama's own train of thought about the form and function of film, like so many others of his generation, was launched by the scholar and critic Shigehiko Hasumi, who taught at Rikkyô University where Aoyama was a student, and was further formed through his close friendship with the steadfastly independent director Kiyoshi Kurosawa, whose horror films such as *Cure* (1997) effectively rejected the dramatic conventions of mainstream Western terror films. (Kurosawa also studied at Rikkyô under Hasumi, as did a number of other future directors including Akihiko Shiota, Kunitoshi Manda and Makoto Shinozaki).³⁸⁵ Put in its simplest terms, all of these figures, including Zeze, share the belief that cinema offers the limitless possibilities of opening up a window to an alternative reality constructed by the filmmaker, acknowledging that the filmic text itself is fundamentally the synergy of its component parts of recorded image and sound, and derives its power from the way these elements are arranged – an



above: This scene from *Dirty Maria* (1998), featuring Akira Yoshino and Tarô Suwa, typifies the “detached” style adopted by Zeze and other non-pink directors in the ‘90s. ©Kokuei/Shintoho

extrapolation of an intellectual way of looking at what cinema is, and is capable of, that has its roots in the ‘60s in such figures as the leader of the French *Nouvelle Vague*, Jean-Luc Godard. (It might be worth noting here that Hasumi’s academic foundations were originally in French Literature Studies. It is interesting to conjecture what direction Japanese cinema might have taken in the ‘90s if his academic background was in a more English-language based discipline, rather than French.)

The clues to Zeze’s own convictions can be seen in the tongue-in-cheek directorial credit of Jean-Luc Zezemusch for his 1991 film *No Man’s Land*, which portrays the actions of a group of disassociated youngsters living somewhere within the urban sprawl of Greater Tokyo during the dawning days of the first Iraq War. The war itself hardly impinges on their daily reality, unfolding as distantly and safely as a dream as it plays out in the mirror universe of international television reportage. This device of contextualising the lives of the characters in reference to events on the other side of the world via images on TV screens or radio news reports was re-employed in a couple of

films released in 2004 in the light of the second US-led invasion and military occupation of Iraq: Toshiya Ueno’s *Ambiguous* (2003); and *Tokyo Noir*, a non-pink omnibus film released in 2004 about women working in the sex industry directed by Masato Ishioka and Naoto Kumazawa.³⁸⁶ In some respects similar to the cinematic shorthand of fighter planes screeching across the sky in the films of the ‘50s and ‘60s, this strategy not only registers the impotence of the country and its inhabitants in the face of the actions of a global superpower, it also emphasises that such images of distant conflicts are very far divorced from the bloody reality of what they portray.

Another filmmaking conviction shared by Shigehiko Hasumi’s disciples which relates to post-structural theory is the usage of a presentational style that shifts the onus of interpretation onto the viewer. This corresponds to what Barthes terms as ‘writerly texts’, in which the consumer of a work is invited to participate in the creation of its meaning (in contrast to ‘readerly texts’, represented by the bulk, though by no means all, of Hollywood’s output, in which the reader is kept passive and blocked out of creative

interpretation and steered towards a single intended conclusion.) The films of Kurosawa, Aoyama and Zeze (and to varying degrees those of other directors of the period including Hirokazu Kore'eda, Nobuhiro Suwa, Naomi Kawase and Takeshi Kitano) are constructed according to principles that resolutely eschew Hollywood norms of representation, and came to typify a strain of Japanese cinema in the '90s that adhered to what Aaron Gerow refers to as the 'detached style'.³⁸⁷

Gerow's definition is worth exploring in depth in relation to Zeze's films such as *Dream of Garuda* and *Raigyo*, with their dreamlike, self-contained atmospheres and a narrative approach that downplays moral judgement and a conventional cause-and-effect logic. He writes: "To put it succinctly the detached style is defined by a detached stance on the levels of film form and narration. The camera is often placed at a distance from the characters, refraining from approaching their bodies and, especially, their faces, in effect refusing to intrude on whatever inner thoughts and emotions are etched on their physique. Editing generally abstains from breaking up and analysing space, not only in order to deny viewers proximity to characters and their internal states, but also to resist dramatizing the scenes and ascribing meaning to their actions. Point-of-view shots are particularly rare, as viewers are thoroughly positioned outside the characters. This is thus mostly a long shot, long take style, one that keeps a distance from character psychology and emphasizes the ambiguity of what may exist before the camera. Unlike the classical style, nothing is obvious or clear because style refuses to be subservient to narration. Spectators must work to draw any meaning from the mise-en-scene because there is a general lack of explanation, both of narrative action and of internal states."³⁸⁸

The role of the lesser-known figure of Kishû Izuchi in all this should not be downplayed. *Dream of Garuda* represented both his and Aoyama's first screenwriting credit. The pair later joined forces one more time for Aoyama's most perplexing exploration of the meeting point between landscape, literature, cinema and memory, in *To the Alley: Kenji Nakagami's Surviving Film* (2000). Izuchi was the human figure at the centre of this hour-long experimental piece, reading out passages from the works of Kenji Nakagami (the poet/novelist from Japan's 'unclean' *burakumin* caste) in locations similar to the ones that inspired their literary representation.

While Aoyama quickly stepped out of the pink filmmaking community (if he can be described as ever really belonging to it) following his 1996 theatrical debut *Helpless*, Izuchi stayed by Zeze's side, co-writing the scripts for pink works such as *The Cicada That Chirps Through the Night* (1995), *The Expected Scene* (1996),

Dirty Maria and *Raigyo*, alongside non-pink films like *Kokkuri*, *Hysteric* and *Moon Child*. In fact his contribution to Zeze's work is significant, although he also helped with the scripts for *21st Century Girl* (2001), the second pink film of Zeze's former A.D. Rei Sakamoto, and *Yumeno* (2005), a non-pink feature co-produced by Kokuei and directed by Yoshitaka Kamata. Izuchi also directed the non-pink indie films *Jesus in Nirvana* (1998) and *Lazarus: The House of the Rising Sun* (2007).

Izuchi's scripts with Zeze go far beyond the basic requirements of the softcore genre, unravelling the details and repercussions of the crimes that they are based upon in a perplexing mosaic of unsignalled flashbacks and temporal shifts, resulting in some bona fide mini-masterpieces of Japanese independent cinema. If many of these works adopt the structure of a senseless violent act followed by a journey of self-reconciliation, either by its perpetrators or its victims, then these journeys are most often manifested in physical terms, by way of the 'road movie' format. Again, we recall Aoyama's *Eureka*, an allegorical response to the Aum subway attacks that begins with its three main characters serving as passive witnesses to, and only survivors of, a brutal bus hijacking, and coming to terms with the trauma over the next three and a half hours as they embark on an epic journey across the landscape of Kyûshû.³⁸⁹

Zeze's *Dirty Maria*, like *Raigyo*, was released simultaneously as a pink film and into art cinemas as a mainstream film. It was based on a real-life incident known as the 'Fukuoka Beautician Dismemberment Murder Incident' (*Fukuoka biyôshi bara bara satsujin jiken*) that occurred in 1994. Tarô Suwa, an actor who crops up frequently in Aoyama's films and whose distinctive bald pate renders him instantly-recognisable, plays the film's cab driver protagonist Yukio, whose beautician wife Mayumi vanishes without trace. Fumiko, the bookkeeper at the beauty parlour where Mayumi worked, seems to hold the key to the mystery, revealing that Mayumi had mentioned she was going to visit a remote mountaintop hot spring resort. As the two embark on a mammoth journey across the expansive snowscape en route to the scene of the crime, Yukio soon succumbs to Mayumi's evident sexual charms, but how long will it be before he realises that he is being led a merry dance by the very woman responsible for dismembering his wife?

From its description, *Dirty Maria* may sound like a conventional thriller-cum-murder mystery, but as the reviewer Mark Schilling so eloquently phrases it, "the film soars beyond sordid realism into a stylized realm that may bear little relation to waking life, but has a persuasive dream logic. It's Janus-faced Eros at its outer limits, where murder follows lust in a downward spiral leading to moral exhaustion and a longing for easeful death."³⁹⁰

Schilling's observations on *Dirty Maria* are worth citing at length, as they illuminate the detached style defined by Aaron Gerow and the obstinately fragmentary and anti-dramatic narrative line pursued by Zeze and Izuchi. Schilling states: "Zeze subverts – or rather completely ignores – filmmaking conventions, while pursuing a personal agenda more concerned with reaction than action, poeticized emotion rather than plot points. He takes what would be a key scene in a Hollywood thriller – the bookkeeper's murder of her rival for her lover's affections – and guts it of suspense or terror. One moment the victim is walking out of her apartment, the next the bookkeeper is dragging her bloody body to the bath. Imagine watching *Psycho* minus the shower scene: an enormous hole opens in the film. Zeze, however, uses that hole to make an important point; the act of murder is nothing, the fact of passion everything."

The non-pink film *Hysteric*, which recounted the story of a youthful Japanese Bonnie and Clyde whose chance meeting results in the death of a complete stranger, again stemmed from a true-life case that immediately caught Zeze's attention. "It makes you think a lot about destiny. When I saw the portrait of this boy and girl, the boy looked like a rebel, just like the character in the film, and the girl looked very sober and reserved. She was a factory worker who was studying to work at a day care centre. How did they meet and go on to do these things together? So I did some research and found out that the girl was walking down the street and the boy just happened to be passing by, and that's how they met... It made me think that maybe there is something in me that makes me interested in this sort of thing. I got a real early-Shôwa impression from these two. They were like a forgotten existence in this time, but they were travelling around acting as if everything else that happened at the end of the century, this feeling of winding down after a big party, was irrelevant to them. Somehow their existence proved to me that yes, there was still something here."³⁹¹

Interspersed with such sombre offerings as these came two more playful pieces, which both give patchwork views of Japanese society at different junctures in time. The punkish *Anarchy in Japansuke* (1999) divides its time between 1981 and 1989, looking at how its hedonistic characters have grown up, or rather refused to grow up, throughout Japan's most decadent decade. More consequential is *Tokyo X Erotica* (2001), the first pink film to be shot digitally.

It is worth qualifying this last point. Around six months before *Tokyo X Erotica* first screened in Japan, another digitally-shot film named *I.K.U.* showed at the Cine Palace in Shibuya, having already played a number of film festivals worldwide. When it screened at the 2000 Sundance Festival, *Variety* succinctly summed it up as a "Nipponese sci-fi cyberporn feature."³⁹²

However, the film featured both English and Japanese dialogue and its director, Shu Lea Cheang, was actually a New York-based multi-media video installation artist. *I.K.U.* was only her second feature, following her 1994 debut, *Fresh Kill*. It was produced by Takashi Asai of the Japanese company Uplink (responsible for releasing many pink films on DVD as part of the Nippon Erotics series), but it was clear from the explicitness of the sex (which was optically censored for the domestic release) that a larger market outside of Japan was being targeted. *I.K.U.* is essentially a gimmicky and plotless hotchpotch of relatively explicit simulated scenes of copulation that take place in a variety of extravagantly realised futuristic sets, all shot on digital video in super-saturated hues and embellished with an ostentatious use of CGI. The film managed to play far more widely across the globe than it deserved. Many contemporary reviews cited *Blade Runner* as a point of reference, though perhaps *Tron* might have been more accurate. The narrative revolves around Reiko, a sexual service droid programmed to collect experiences which are downloaded to an 'I.K.U.' main computer (*iku* = the Japanese verb 'to come'; yes, it is that obvious) from where they can be directly enjoyed by downloading them straight to the brain, thereby avoiding genital-to-genital contact. Throughout the data gathering process, Reiko mutates through seven different body forms (i.e. different performers) in order to experience every permutation of sexual pairing (interracial, same sex, etc). Though we can't really label *I.K.U.* as a pink film, a number of actresses more familiar from this world were sprinkled among the cast (including Yumeka Sasaki, also in *Tokyo X Erotica*).

Though also enjoying a fairly widespread exposure on the festival circuit, *Tokyo X Erotica* stayed truer to the genre. Though cameraman Kôichi Saitô remained behind the viewfinder, the use of this new technology brought a markedly fresh style to the visuals. "I wanted to capture the vigour of depiction that can't be planned in advance,"³⁹³ he said of the film. Using the flexibility of the new medium, the film's narrative darts between a number of intertwining characters, locations and time periods. It opens with a brief prologue in which a young man, Kenji, is killed in the Aum subway attacks of 1995. A few years later, in 1997, the dead man's girlfriend Haruka (played by Yumeka Sasaki), has turned cheerlessly to prostitution and engages in various lewd acts in a futuristic-looking Love Hotel with an oddball client dressed in a bunny suit. Back on the day of Kenji's death in 1995, another man (Takeshi Itô) pays a visit to the apartment of his married lover to indulge her rough, adulterous sex-play fantasies. Haruka and Kenji's story later concludes in a near future scenario in 2002, with both of them reunited in death and a new story beginning; the ending again hinges on the motif of rebirth so integral to Zeze's work. The film's earliest sequence is staged in

1989, which was not only a significant year for pink cinema and for Japanese society, but also for the events that occurred in other parts of the world. As the massacre at Tiananmen Square in Beijing is piped into living rooms through TV tubes across the globe, two young couples in Tokyo indulge in an orgy of drink, drugs and partner-swapping, enjoying a freedom that they take for granted.

Breaking up the various scenes with direct-to-camera interviews with the various cast members – all remaining in character – as they pontificate about such weighty topics as society and the nature of life and death, and alternately lighting his scenes in lurid, fantastic colours or stripping them down to lo-res monochrome, the film has an edgy, spontaneous, improvisational feel to it quite distinct from the usual pink production. The new shooting methods also brought new challenges, and actually resulted in a long production time and the film costing more to make than initially intended. Also, to screen it in pink theatres where 35mm projection is still the standard, it was necessary to incur further expenses by transferring it to celluloid. Thus, though adopted wholesale throughout the rest of the Japanese film industry during the following years, the use of digital technology in *Tokyo X Erotica* remained a one-off experiment for Kokuei. Nevertheless, it appears that the rival company Xces have subsequently taken to shooting digitally and transferring to 35mm for theatrical screenings, but this company's work tends to have little in the way of artistic aspirations. As Xces's films are usually shot in a bare minimum of locations, with the sex scenes playing a far more emphatic role within the running time, one can see how this is a cheaper and quicker option, even if it does bring the resulting films nearer to AV territory.

After a three-year period spent on more mainstream productions, Zeze's much-anticipated return to the pink film, with *Crevice of Skin* in 2004, saw him once again utilising a scenario based on a real-life incident, this time directing from a script by Aki Satô, who also wrote Zeze's Eurospace production *Secret Journey*, made the same year. Similar to Wakamatsu's *Cycling Chronicles: Landscapes the Boy Saw*, its central character is a teenage boy – in this instance named Hidenori – on the run after killing his mother, and the background details of the initial murder are similarly kept frustratingly hazy. He is first seen fleeing, accompanied by a beautiful girl around the same age as him named Sunako (played by the lissom beauty known by the single name of Fujiko, who was the daughter in Takashi Miike's *Visitor Q* and appeared in Takashi Ishii's 2005 film *Flower and Snake 2: Paris/Shizoku*). Despite her deceptively young looks, Sunako actually turns out to be Hidenori's autistic aunt, who lived in the same house with him and his mother.

Shell-shocked and withdrawn, their actions dominated at first by nothing more than survival

instinct as, for the first time, they make a break into a hostile outside world, the two communicate solely through spasmodic body movements and animalistic grunts. Sunako's attempts to reach through to Hidenori initially seem futile. Then, while washing herself in a secluded forest stream, she is assaulted by the driver of an ice cream van who has just given them a lift. The two escape through the trees, eventually ending up in a secluded wooden cottage where they hide out, eking out a feral existence by raiding neighbouring gardens, gorging on stolen tomatoes and pumpkins. With Hidenori still in a state of shock, Sunako eventually breaks the communication barrier using her body, seducing him in a bathtub full of floating ripe tomatoes. It is a turning point in their relationship, with Hidenori now becoming the sexually dominant partner in this strange relationship. Then one day, Hidenori plunges a knife into his stomach, forcing the pair to leave their makeshift haven and seek help in the big city.

Once again, the film's most immediate virtue is Saitô's beautiful cinematography. The mood and colour of the natural elements suffuse every frame to evoke all the primal energy of the natural forest environment in which most of *Crevice of Skin* unfolds. As well as having a higher budget and longer shooting schedule than the average pink film, the production also benefits from other such anomalies as being shot with simultaneously recorded sound, entirely on location and using natural light, and being blown up from 16mm film stock to give the image a grainier look. The colour palette of strong, violent reds against lush, verdant greens (Sunako's scarlet coat making her figure stand out against the grassy backdrop in the opening scenes) and the strong attention to textures (the camera focusing on the dried blood or water droplets on her skin) brings an invigoratingly tactile feeling to the film, heightened by an evocative soundscape of running water, wind rustling through the trees and doves cooing somewhere in their branches.

What any of it actually means is left intentionally open to debate, though a debate it appears that this time round few were willing to engage in. Unlike Zeze's earlier attempts at pushing the pink film into more experimental realms, *Crevice of Skin* was criticised as being excessively arty, and met with incomprehension by most Japanese viewers; a print was never subtitled for foreign release. At the time of writing it represents the last pink film by any of the Four Devils to be produced by Kokuei, and perhaps its muted reception points to the fact that, fifteen years after three of the main figures made their debuts, their significance to a new generation of viewers has been lost.

Just as concepts that originated in France in the middle of the 20th Century – such as post-structural criticism and auteurism – had become rather passé,

unfashionable or merely pretentious in the West, so too had local audiences failed to be wooed by the new trend in Japanese arthouse pictures inspired by such discourses during the '90s. And so the pessimistic, more apprehensive, works that marked *fin-de-siècle* arthouse cinema dramatically fell from vogue to be replaced by more cheery, hedonistic and character-driven pieces more rooted in daily reality, rather than abstract metaphysics.

Shinji Aoyama, to name but one example, was hit particularly hard shortly after the wide international acclaim he received for *Eureka*, when the Suncent production company run by Takenori Sentô went into liquidation in 2001. Sentô had been active in pushing a more artistic style of Japanese cinema overseas, and had been instrumental in introducing Aoyama and a number of other independent directors, like Naomi Kawase and Nobuhiro Suwa, to major international festivals such as Berlin, Rotterdam and Cannes. Foreign critical prizes and plaudits did not, unfortunately, add up to local box-office success. Regular Japanese film-goers were probably less interested in who was behind the camera than what was onscreen, and though the detached style might have had its supporters in the forms of critics, theorists and fellow filmmakers, among the general public there simply weren't enough who wanted to put that much effort into watching a film.

The mid-'90s resurgence of interest in the pink genre might therefore best be seen as mirroring a rekindled interest, led by filmmakers who doubled as critics, in what was going on in Japanese cinema in general. This is an opinion that Zeze seems to hold: "By chance our timing might have been just right. At the time, there was much ado about the so-called single theatre art-house system, with regular films also moving in that direction. I suppose we were just riding on that tide. Still, by now the auteur focus seems to have come to an end, so they're not the centre of attention. You can say the same things about pink films and the films of young directors these days; that the films don't sell if they're auteur-driven. I think they have to break through that."³⁹⁴

As tastes and audience demographics began to shift across the whole Japanese film industry, so too did the audience for the pink film change to fit this new climate. While there was little perceptible difference in the bulk of the pink industry's mass output, the problem of the ongoing decline in its original audiences remained. Did the new generation of directors at Kokuei have the wherewithal to reverse this trend by bringing in new, fresh viewers to ensure the genre made it through into the next millennium? Was this even something the company was actively striving for, and if so, were they limited by the primary arenas in which the films were actually shown? Or had the industry as a whole run its course?

Footnotes

³³³ In a brief segment on the 'The Kings of Pink' in Jonathan Ross's 2002 *Japanorama* documentary for the BBC, Sano was conspicuous by his absence.

³³⁴ However, during the time Sano was active as a director from 1989-97 he actually made more films than Zeze.

³³⁵ Ôya is credited as co-director for Ishii's first version of *Panic in High School* in 1977, though following a solitary directorial offering with the 16mm feature *The Day the Gods Lapsed* in 1979 (with Matsui as assistant director), he subsequently disappeared from view.

³³⁶ The director Shunichi Nagasaki was also active in filmmaking while at the university, though being in the year above, had little contact with Ishii and his colleagues until later after they'd all graduated and were negotiating their first steps within the tough environment of the commercial industry. See Midnight Eye interview with Shunichi Nagasaki by Chuck Stephens and Tom Mes published 8 June, 2006. www.midnighteye.com/interviews/shunichi_nagasaki2.shtml.

³³⁷ The *zainichi* issue in Japan is a complex one, as few people are able to physically distinguish between Koreans and 'pure-blood' ethnic Japanese, and Korean residents in Japan were forced to adopt Japanese names. Commercial films to tackle this theme include Yôichi Sai's *All Under the Moon* (*Tsuki wa Dotchi ni Deteiru*, 1993), Isao Yukisada's *Go* (2001) and Kazuyuki Izutsu's *Pacchigi!* (*We Shall Overcome Someday*) (2004).

³³⁸ Interview with the director on the Artsmagic release of *Under the Carp Banner*.

³³⁹ Another former jishu filmmaker who had enjoyed the patronage of PFF, 'George' Iida is best known for *Spiral* (*Rasen*, 1998), the companion piece to Hideo Nakata's *Ring*, as well as the science fiction features *Night Head* (1994), *Another Heaven* (2000) and *Dragonhead* (2003).

³⁴⁰ Though Japanese is often described as a language with very little in the way of profanity, certain words used to describe disabilities are banned under broadcasting code. Whether this word was bleeped out intentionally by the filmmaker, by Eirin or by *bide-rin* is unclear, but interestingly, in the text intertitles containing the translated *kappa*-talk during a scene in which Tomoko and her husband talk dirty as they engage in lewd acts with a cucumber, the obscene term banned in print media of *manko* (vagina) is replaced by the 'O' (*maru*) sign – similar to the use of the 'X' placeholder in the onscreen text in Kumashiro's films.

³⁴¹ Hunter, Jack. pg 123. To name but a few examples, the quote has been reproduced in the essays "Cultural Transformation, Corporeal Prohibitions and Body Horror in Sato Hisayasu's *Naked Blood*" by Jay McRoy in the anthology *Japanese Horror Cinema* and "Consuming the Female Body: Pinku Eiga and the Case of Sagawa Issei" by Pia D. Harritz for the online journal *In Media Res*, as well as in the biographical information on the director contained in the DVDs released by the company Screen Edge. When confronted with his alleged past words in the on-disc interview for one of his films later released by Artsmagic, Satô exploded in laughter and said "Who said such a horrifying thing!... Obviously that expression is a metaphor and an exaggeration. What I wanted to say was that society is becoming more and more individualistic, but we all have to question that sometimes. So I didn't mean to encourage them to become murderers, but if you don't defend what you believe in, society can crush it and you lose your beliefs. That's what I wanted to say and warn people when I was being interviewed."

³⁴² The director's title, as is mentioned within the film, refers to *Rafflesia Arnoldii*, the largest flower in the world. Growing in the jungles of Southeast Asia, particularly in Borneo and Sumatra, the plant is incredibly rare, and indeed threatened with extinction. It lives as a parasite on the *Tetrastigma* vine, and has no roots, leaves or stems. It is very difficult to see one in bloom, as the flower, which has a diameter of up to one metre, only opens for a couple of days, exuding a pungent smell of rotting meat to attract flies to pollinate it.

³⁴³ Interview on Artsmagic DVD release of *Survey Map of a Paradise Lost*.

³⁴⁴ Sévéon, Julien. "An Encounter with Hisayasu Sato" published in *Asian Cult Cinema* 34, 1st Quarter 2002.

³⁴⁵ Sévéon, Julien. Ibid.

³⁴⁶ *Shisen* is a glance, a line of sight, while *jô* means above, so its literally "above the line of sight."

- 347** Sévéon, Julien. Ibid. Interestingly Larry Clark later picked up on this very point in the short documentary *Impaled* (2006).
- 348** Sévéon, Julien. Ibid.
- 349** See *Newsweek* 19 August, 1991. "Halcion: It's the Most Widely Prescribed Sleeping Pill in the World. But is It Safe?"
- 350** For more details, see Harritz, Pia D. "Consuming the Female Body: Pinku Eiga and the Case of Sagawa Issei." In *Media Res*. www.medievidenskab-odense.dk/index.php?id=57.
- 351** Sévéon. Ibid.
- 352** Sévéon. Ibid.
- 353** The synopses given in Weisser, Thomas. *Japanese Cinema Encyclopedia: The Sex Films*, pg 463-479.
- 354** *Variety*, 26 December, 2005. Review by Russell Edwards.
- 355** Toshiaki Satô was to have made his debut as early as 1986 with a film for Million, but this was cancelled when the company quit production. He made two video films in 1988 for Nikkatsu Video, a short-lived subsidiary of Nikkatsu, and was slated to direct a further film for the new Ropponica line, but this too was cancelled halfway. I am indebted to Roland Domenig for this information.
- 356** Like most small production companies Outcast Produce did not fund its own productions. Kokuei financed a number of these, like Satô's *Petting Lesbians: Erogeous Zone* (1993) and Ueno's *The Dragon God and Shurenge* (1994) and so while Iwata's name appears on the credits as producer, Daisuke Asakura is given the credit of 'planner' (*kikaku*). Again, I'd like to thank Roland Domenig for this information.
- 357** Though pink films had used housewife scenarios before the advent of Roman Porno, it was Nikkatsu who first billed them under the *Apartment Wife* title.
- 358** Takita's films make use of the same two central characters from film to film. Other directors who have made films bearing the *Chikan Densha* label, including Toshiaki Satô with *Tandem* have been doing their own thing with this scenario.
- 359** As the producer has mentioned in conversation with this author.
- 360** Interview with Asakura. *24th Pia Film Festival Catalogue* 2002. pg 86.
- 361** The quote, which originally appeared in the 1995 Rotterdam Film Festival catalogue, is reproduced on the Screen Edge disk of *Tandem*.
- 362** Interview with Donald Richie by the author which appeared on Midnight Eye on 8 December, 2003. www.midnighteye.com/interviews/donald_richie.shtml. Richie has written prodigiously on Ozu, but this quote succinctly sums up the essence of what he has to say about the director's distinct visual style.
- 363** The *chi* of the word *chijo* is the same as that used in *chikan*, or molester or pervert. It also means 'foolish', so the composite of the made-up word *chijo* can be read as 'pervert woman' or 'foolish woman'.
- 364** The Screen Edge DVD release of *Tandem* adds an even greater degree of ellipsis of its own – it appears that a reel has gone missing during its transfer from the film print!
- 365** The *Enjo Kôsai* or 'compensated dating' phenomenon of high school girls prostituting themselves out for cash caused a sensation in the national media at the end of the '90s, inspiring a number of movies on the subject, with Masato Harada's hysterical *Bounce Kogals* (2000) the best known example.
- 366** Lyrics for the song were written by scriptwriter Shinji Imaoka, while the music was by Isao Yamada, who scored many of Toshiaki Satô's movies, both in and outside of the pink genre, as well as quite a few of those of the acclaimed indie director Shinji Aoyama.
- 367** <http://members.aol.com/sarumachi>.
- 368** www.festival-cannes.fr/films/fiche_film.php?langue=6002&id_film=4283368.
- 369** The series was divided into the three distinct categories of Horror Banchô, Eros Banchô and Wara Banchô (comedy films). Mamoru Watanabe joined Zeze in the Eros section with *Tokyo Desire* (*Katame dake no koi / One Eyed Love*), while *The Grudge* director Takashi Shimizu made *The Stranger from Afar* (*Marebito*) as one of the Horror Banchô films. They premiered at Eurospace in the Autumn 2004. Several of the films featured performers better known for their pink works, including Takeshi Itô, Nikki and Yumeka Sasaki, Yumi Yoshiyuki and Kazuo Komizu.
- 370** Interview with Zeze. Midnight Eye. www.midnighteye.com/interviews/takahisa_zeze.shtml.
- 371** See Domenig, Roland. "The Anticipation of Freedom: Art Theatre Guild and Japanese Independent Cinema". Midnight Eye. 28 June, 2004. www.midnighteye.com/features/art-theatre-guild.shtml. There is no certainty about which pink films Hara worked on, as there are no listings on the JMDB for such work.
- 372** Midnight Eye interview with Zeze. Ibid.
- 373** *Gang!* involved Kunihiro Matsuoka as cameraman, who would later follow Zeze into the world of *pinku eiga* and erotic V-cinema. Though reasonably prolific, Matsuoka never really achieved much in the way of visibility for his works, though this early friendship with Zeze led to later roles as assistant director on *Hysteria* and *Dog Star*.
- 374** Interestingly, director Yoshiho Fukuoka directed a pink film the previous year entitled *Japa-yuki Report: Torn Emotions*. Though distributed by Xces, it was produced by a company called Film City, and financed by Kokuei: Daisuke Asakura is listed as 'planner'.
- 375** Thanks to Roland Domenig for this information.
- 376** Zeze's film was rather ahead of its time in this respect. Mainstream cinema only began really to pick up on the country's diverse ethnic population in earnest during the '90s, with the most salient films being Katsuhiro Ôtomo's *World Apartment Horror* (1991), Yôichi Sai's *All Under the Moon* (*Tsuki wa dotchi ni dette iru*, 1993) and Shunji Iwai's *Swallowtail Butterfly* (*Suwarôteiru*, 1996), and their mood was generally rather less despondent.
- 377** The Haneda monorail, like the Bullet train, was a monument to Japan's modernity, completed at the time of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. Though still in service, with the diminishing role of the airport it served it now stands like a testament to a bygone, more optimistic age.
- 378** The film was shot in Taiwan.
- 379** Midnight Eye interview with Zeze. Ibid.
- 380** Such places were formerly referred to as *toruko*, or Turkish Baths, until naturally the Turkish embassy became concerned about the image that was being presented about their culture.
- 381** My thanks to Roland Domenig for furnishing me with this valuable contextual information.
- 382** The *kanji* characters used in the Japanese spelling do not carry the meaning from the original Sanskrit, and are used only phonetically. *Ra* means 'gauze' or 'thin silk' while *kan* is one of the many characters used to refer to China – the same as in *kanji* ('Chinese characters').
- 383** *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, 1994.
- 384** The *sabu* part of 'Saburô' is one reading for the character for 'three'.
- 385** Mes, Tom and Sharp, Jasper. *The Midnight Eye Guide to New Japanese Film*. pg 216.
- 386** The British film *The Great Ecstasy of Robert Carmichael* (2005), directed by Thomas Clay, also used this device.
- 387** Gerow, Aaron. "From Independence to Detachment in Recent Japanese Film", from *The Age of Independents* catalogue published by Hong Kong International Film Festival, 2002.
- 388** Ibid.
- 389** On 20 March, 1995 the renegade Aum Shinrikyo religious cult led by Shoko Asahara unleashed lethal Sarin gas onto the Tokyo subway system. 12 commuters were killed immediately, but over a thousand suffered after effects (figures vary as to exactly how many). For further details, see Tatsuya Mori's documentaries *A* (1998) and its follow-up *A2* (2001) and Haruki Murakami's non-fictional work *Underground*, which balances eyewitness testimonials of the surviving victims with interviews with some of the cult members.
- 390** Schilling, Mark. *Contemporary Japanese Film*. pg 224-225.
- 391** Midnight Eye interview with Zeze. Ibid.
- 392** Harvey, Dennis. *Variety*, Monday, 27 March, 2000.
- 393** Hayashida, Yoshiyuki interview with Takahisa Zeze. "Something Grand About the Naked Body: Zeze Takahisa Talks About a Genre Unique to Japan", from *The Age of Independents* festival catalogue published by Hong Kong International Film Festival, 2002.
- 394** Hayashida, Yoshiyuki interview with Zeze. Ibid.



Reiko Kagami as one of the man-eaters in Sachi Hamano's
Greedy Housewives 2: Take Me to Heaven Technique (2003).
© Shinto

Girls and Boys Come Out to Play

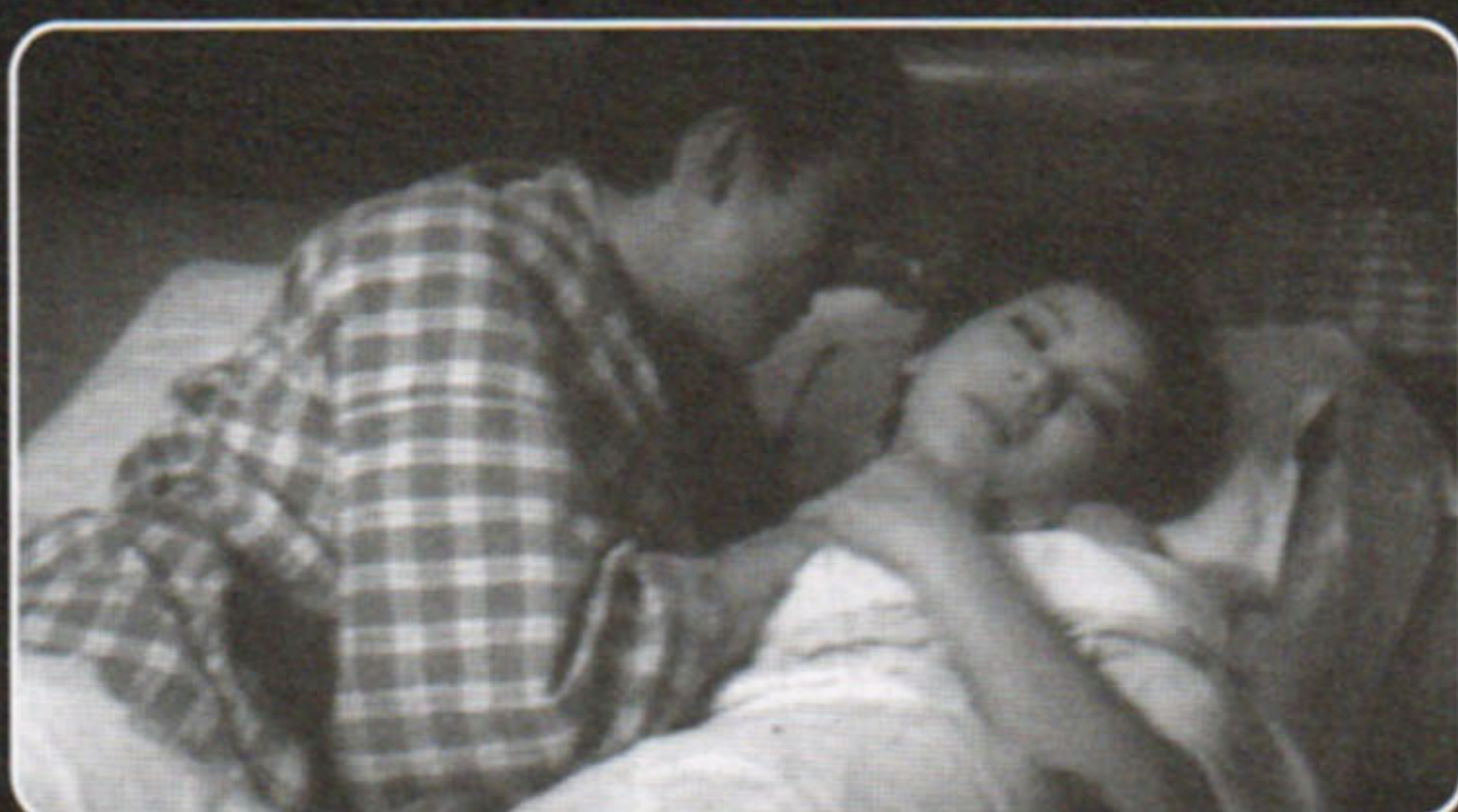
The clichéd view of pornography is that it is produced and consumed exclusively by men. Japanese society is also often viewed by foreigners as being one in which the male members have the upper hand, where the prevailing national ethos of the 'corporate samurai' has seen gender roles dramatically exaggerated, with the husband adopting the role of the breadwinner, the wife relegated to staying at home indoors, and those women still awaiting marriage viewed as somewhat incomplete. The popular conception of the meek and submissive Japanese woman, bound by modesty and etiquette, persists in the Western imagination. Put two and two together and you may have an image of the Japanese sex film as an exclusively male domain in which men can live out their sexual (and often sexist) fantasies in a safely homosocial environment – an assumption that seems readily confirmed by a quick peak at the viewers inside the average pink theatre.

When subjected to closer scrutiny, however, the picture becomes considerably more complex. One can debate *ad infinitum* the issues regarding the exact status of women in Japan, as many have done and no doubt will continue to do. Still, on a social and cultural level the situation has, as in almost every part of the world, changed significantly over the decades. Nowadays, the sector of the population made up by single young female office workers, collectively referred to by the somewhat condescending label of 'OL' (short for 'Office Lady'), benefits from a far larger disposable income than previous generations of women ever have, and in fact make up the country's largest consumer group. This is reflected in the demand for the new women's magazines, like *Hanako*, that emerged in the late '80s. As Karen Ma notes of the phenomenon in *The Modern Madam Butterfly*, "So popular was the magazine that many new women's magazines followed its lead to cash in on the OL consumerism phenomenon, thus creating a solid OL subculture that has become the envy of many salarymen."³⁹⁵ In the pages of these magazines, sexual matters are treated with increased openness and honesty, allowing women to articulate their own desires and fantasies more freely, without being kept in check by the conventions of a patriarchal cultural protocol.

In more general terms too, pornography has drastically changed in its focus and its external demeanour from the days when feminist opponents like America's Andrea Dworkin saw it as yet another manifestation of the male gender's institutional control over women's bodies, and the market for women's erotica has increased significantly across much of the globe since the turn of the millennium.

Perhaps unsurprisingly then, these developments have been reflected in the increased female audiences for the pink film. From the mid-'90s onwards, 'Ladies Night' retrospectives have been offered in arthouse venues on the conventional theatre circuit, such as Uplink Factory and Eurospace. These are examples of the new batch of micro-cinemas that cropped up around the country during this decade. Their cosmopolitan décor, when compared to the rude and austere furnishings of the traditional Japanese *eiga-kan*, appear to have been calculated to appeal to the sensibilities of a more sophisticated breed of audience. Special screening events followed by panel discussions with directors and actors – like the "A New School of Pink-Movies" event held at the Athenée Français in August 2004, or the annual Pink Taishō Best Ten awards ceremony hosted by *PG* magazine and currently held in Ikebukuro's Shinbungei-za theatre – feature a considerable scattering of female faces amongst the audience. Specialist adult TV channels and broadband internet sites also feature programmes specifically doctored to appeal to the tastes of discerning women viewers. One broadband internet site offering up a series of Kokuei's films for download, as part of a series entitled 'Ladies Theatre', advertised Toshiki Satō's *Adultery Diary: One More Time While I'm Still Wet* (1996) as being like a pink version of the Demi Moore vehicle *Ghost* (1990),³⁹⁶ and in an interview with the author, Takahisa Zeze revealed that a friend working as a producer at a cable TV company had told him, "when they run a series of pink films made for cable or V-cinema, a lot of their viewers are housewives watching the films in the daytime."³⁹⁷ Meanwhile, the more tasteful and genteel packaging of Uplink's Nippon Erotics DVD label, launched just after the turn of the millennium, seems to be targeted at a unisex audience. Furthermore, there has been at least one website offering a large selection of reviews of recent pink releases written from a woman's perspective, as well as tips on the best venues for single girls to go to without laying themselves open to harassment. (The 'Dig the Pink' website is the project of an anonymous group of fans collectively known as the Asakusa Ping Pong Sisters: the name stems from both Tokyo's venerated entertainment district and the fact that, originally, the two virtual critics used to bounce ideas and opinions off one another regarding the merits of the latest releases, à la Siskel and Ebert.)³⁹⁸

So far, there seems to have been no theatrical market for erotic movies exclusively targeted at the female consumer in Japan, though outside of film and video, there exists a thriving market for adult-themed erotic manga known as 'Ladies Comics' (*redizu comikku*,



or *redîcomî*). Nevertheless, in cinema women are at least being invited to the party, to share in what is essentially a boys-only domain, and conspicuously the content of much of the pink genre has toned down its rougher excesses. Violent rape and SM fantasies, a notable aspect of the '80s pink film, have become a rare sight in this increasingly egalitarian climate. With the pink film's primary audience still assumed to be male, it might well be a mistake to attribute this to the new interest from women viewers. Nevertheless, with DVD and TV sales now a more important source of revenue for the *pinku eiga* industry than traditional adult theatres, it appears that several production companies, and those directors who make films for them (notably Shinji Imaoka and Yûji Tajiri), are well aware of the larger potential market outside of their traditional audience base.

It was not always this way. For decades, the only place to see these films was in pink theatres. For obvious reasons few women would have been so bold as to venture into these scruffy fleapits, and those that did laid themselves open to the unwanted attentions of their fellow spectators. Other practical considerations as mundane as a lack of suitable toilet facilities served as a further deterrent. Thus, much of the discourse surrounding the pink film has been made up of male voices, many of whom ignore the very issues raised by the prevalent depictions of women as passive repositories for male desire. There have been some notable exceptions, most significantly Nobuko Kawashima, the editor of the first magazine devoted to erotic films, *Seijin Eiga*, and also the author of a number of books on pink films and AV, but they were generally the exception to the norm, and the pink film world was generally off-limits to casual female viewers. As critic Ikuko Ishihara writes in an article entitled 'Segregation and Participation: A Female Perspective on Pink Films and Romantic Porn' that accompanied a 2002 retrospective at the Hong Kong International Film Festival, "some brave women did go to X-rated theatres, with either a simple interest in them 'as films', or a progressive philosophy that sex and desire should be 'equally open to women'. Unfortunately they were molested by male viewers and felt deeply hurt. They decided not to go back, ever again. Furthermore; stories, camera angles, and positions in sex sequences all catered to satisfying men's lustful desire, while disappointing female viewers."³⁹⁹

Bearing this in mind, it is all the more surprising to discover what a large role women play at almost every level of production. Go to any pink shoot nowadays and one can see that women are a visible force, working in varied capacities as director's assistants, lighting engineers, sound recordists, make-up artists and camera operators.⁴⁰⁰ In fact, almost since day one, women have played an active role behind the camera, in a creative as well as a supporting capacity.⁴⁰¹

The first female pink director was Kyôko Ôgimachi, with the aptly-titled *Yakuza Geisha* (1965). This otherwise

above: Some scenes from Kyôko Ôgimachi's *Yakuza Geisha* (1965), the first *pinku eiga* ever directed by a woman, perhaps...

ineffectual offering from the early days of the *eroduction* features two groups of molls from rival mobster gangs using their feminine wiles to aid the vying factions as they jostle for top dog position. Ôgimachi had previously appeared as an actress in the late-'50s films of Shintoho, and later those of Ôkura Eiga: her name can be spotted at the lower end of the credits on some of Shintoho's *ama* films. Despite the fact that the magazine *Seijin Eiga* sported a set report while the film was in production which made much of the fresh feminine touch brought to the screen by Ôgimachi ("It's not a lie, take a look... The Birth of a Female Auteur Kyôko Ôgimachi", screamed the article headline),⁴⁰² several of the directors interviewed for this book who were active at the time expressed some scepticism as to whether it was actually her wielding the megaphone on set, or whether her credit was merely a publicity stunt. It appears that Ôgimachi was in fact Mitsugu Ôkura's mistress and a frequent beneficiary of the producer's favours. Regardless, it was her only credit on the production side of pink, and her name is conspicuously absent from the genre's history after this alleged cinematic first.

This career progression from actress to director, however, set the trend for the majority of women who would become active behind the lens. The most significant of the early figures was one of the genre's first major pin-up girls, Rumi Tama. Born 15 January, 1947 in Tokyo's Setagaya ward, Tama came from a family with strong links to the film world. Her father and uncle both



above: Sakô Sakawa directs Rumi Tama in an onset photo published in issue 44 of *Seijin Eiga* magazine (September 1969). The article fails to mention the title of the film, though as the same issue sports an advert for the release of Sakawa's latest, *Tease of the Pillow*, it might well be this title.



above: Original poster art featuring Rumi Tama in an early starring role for a long-forgotten film directed by Sakô Sakawa, *Tease of the Pillow* (1969).

worked at Daiei – the former as a set designer, while the latter was the cameraman Kimio Watanabe – and her brother was a lighting man at Toei. Tama, however, never made it to a major studio set as an actress. After graduating from high school in 1965 she performed in the early Tokyo Eiga title *Naked Girl Mountain Range*, and in Cine Pro's *Forbidden Skin*. She would go on to star in a deluge of pink films over the course of the following decades, gaining special notice for her role in Shinya Yamamoto's *Both Sides of Prostitution* (1969). She also brought her iconic presence, fairly late on in her screen career, to some dozen Roman Porno titles, beginning in 1975 with Shogorô Nishimura's *New Apartment Wife: Prostitution Group Building 13*. Nishimura also directed her as the dark and sexy *Extreme Indulgence Woman: Pleasure Deep Within* (1976), where she played a newly-released jailbird seeking revenge against her husband's mistress: it was her violent expression of disapproval when confronted by her university professor spouse's extra-curricular activities – she bashed him over the head with an iron after catching him *in flagrante delicto* – that resulted in her seven-year-long incarceration in the first place.



above: Reiko Kagami in the first *Greedy Housewives* film (2003), directed by Sachi Hamano under the pseudonym Chise Matoba. ©Shintoho

Many of Tama's pink films were directed by Akitaka Kimata and produced by his Pro Taka company. She later married the director, becoming his third wife on 15 September, 1978, and also appeared in several films made by his son from his first marriage, Seiji Izumi, whose name we have already encountered briefly in an earlier chapter. (Interestingly, in terms of keeping things in the family, Tama's sister also followed her into the pink film profession, acting under the name of Michiko Tani. Though she gave an early performance in Masao Adachi's *Rebel Woman: Dream Hell* (1970), most of her appearances were alongside her sister in pink films directed by Kimata.) In 1981, just as her onscreen charms were beginning to fade, Tama stepped into the role of director for *Revenge Sex: Girl Rape*, and subsequently went on to direct and script a further eighty or so films for the Pro Taka family business, most distributed by Million Film, then later by Xces. Titles include: *Molester and Divorcee* (1985); *Swaying Huge Breasts 103cm* (1989); and *Young Wife: SM Confinement* (1991). Tama's last work to date is the straight-to-video production *Aphrodisiac* (2002).

The most prolific and often-referenced woman director is Sachiko Hamano, usually credited as Sachi Hamano, after she dropped the tell-tale 'ko' from the her first name early on in her career upon the early advice of producers, in order to conceal her gender.⁴⁰³ Born 19 March, 1948 as Sachiko Suzuki, Hamano is something of a rarity for a woman director in the pink world, in as much as that she did not come from an acting background. Instead, after quitting a photography course at Tokyo college, where she had first started experimenting with 16mm filmmaking, she entered the industry by way of a short stint at Wakamatsu Pro, for whom she worked on a couple of titles including Masao Adachi's *Sex Play* (1969). Evidently the environment at Wakamatsu's company didn't suit her, as she soon quit to work under a number of different directors, including Kaoru Umezawa, Genji Nakamura, and Sojirô Motogi. She made her debut in 1970 for Million Film with *17-Year-Old Free Love Tribe*,⁴⁰⁴ and spent the decade working freelance before founding her own production company, named Tantansha, in 1983.



above: Yukari Sakurada as the wilful feminist writer in *Greedy Housewives 2: Take Me to Heaven Technique*. ©Shintoho

Sachi Hamano is perhaps better known by reputation than for any of her individual works, and if you take a quick look at her filmography it is easy to see why: she has made an immense number of them. Hamano herself cites a figure of over 300, though the online Japanese Movie Database only lists around 150. Moreover, in order to detract from criticism from fellow filmmakers who saw her vast output as lowering the general standard of the industry product (the pink filmmaking community, is after all, a fairly small and tight-knit one), she has also hidden behind the pseudonym Chise Matoba.

Hamano raises the interesting issue as to whether a female director actually brings anything different to the screen in comparison to her male counterparts. If anything, Hamano's work is lewder, ruder and cruder than most in the genre, as clearly demonstrated by a pair of titles that were evidently shot back-to-back on the standard modest budgets. The films in question share the same cast members and were both released in 2003 within several months of one another, as *Greedy Housewives* and *Greedy Housewives 2: Take Me to Heaven Technique*.⁴⁰⁵ The first film follows jaded

young housewife Aya (played by an actress going by the single name of Yuki) over the 24-hour period after she leaves her overzealous husband after one night she is rudely awakened from her sleep by his rather rough and ready handling. In order to remind him that a wedding ring doesn't give a man *carte blanche* to rape his wife, and that there is a world of difference between love and sex, she sets off for a night of fun with her silicon-enhanced friend Kei (Reiko Kagami) to prove the point. Their first port-of-call is a rendezvous in a love hotel, arranged over the internet, with two virile young strangers, after which Aya photographs the evidence using her mobile phone camera and mails the sexy snapshot back to her remorseful husband. Kei later introduces Aya to a sex counsellor with the aim of helping her break down any further inhibitions, resulting in a climactic orgy that takes up most of the final reel.

Greedy Housewives 2 begins with the assertive writer of a woman's lifestyle manual, Eri (Yukari Sakurada), appearing on TV to promote her new book in which she claims that women who devote their lives exclusively to

being housewives are effectively nothing better than livestock, reliant upon 'selling' sex to their husbands in order to receive their monthly housekeeping allowance. Her words manage to ruffle more than a few feathers among two of the indicted parties watching independently of one another in their living rooms; both immediately set out on their paths of revenge. Tamayo (Kagami) lies in wait outside Eri's publishing company and lures her editor to a hotel room, promising to give him an exclusive on the authentic sexual powers of housewives and clinching a book deal of her own in the process, while Hiroko (Motoko Sasaki) uses her own charms to draw Eri's young lover into her immaculately-kept abode, where she serves up more than just dinner on the dining-room table to keep him there.

Despite all the criticism that Hamano's leering brand of porn can hardly be described as 'feminist' as she has sometimes claimed (which in itself seems remarkable given the market she is working in), in these films the focus does at least remain on these fun-loving bosom buddies going out of their way to enjoy themselves at the expense of men, rather than serving up the more typical stereotypes of passivity. Indeed, they offer a view of female sexuality that is so over-the-top it comes across as threatening. Sensuous, imposing and insatiable man-eaters clearly in control of their desires, Hamano's women writhe on top of their partners, lying prone and exhausted between their thighs, while the camera remains fixed on the ecstatic expressions on their faces and the near-impossible gymnastics of their bodies. As the two dominating women lean over to hungrily kiss one another during the group sex scene in the counsellor's consulting room at the climax of the first film, the men play such a secondary role that they might as well not be there. In terms of explicitness, these films push the envelope as far as it goes. Vaseline-dildos being tongued behind gauzy swathes of soft fabric masquerade as the hardcore sequences barred by the country's censorship laws, while the skimpy, light fabric stretched over the leading ladies' pubic tresses is so revealing its presence is literally immaterial.

Hamano, whose autobiography, *When a Woman Makes a Film*, was published in 2005, has also put her name to two works outside of the pink genre that offer a more conventional feminist reading. *In Search of a Lost Writer* (1998) is a biopic about the overlooked woman novelist Midori Ozaki, while *Lily Festival* (2001) takes a humorous and spirited look at the reawakening desires of a group of ladies of advancing years (the oldest is 91) when an aged Lothario moves into their apartment block. Still, with such a lengthy and fecund period in erotic filmmaking behind her, it is doubtful whether she'll be remembered for these later aspects of her career.

It is easier to detect a woman's presence behind the camera in the films of Yumi Yoshiyuki, whose work sits at the opposite end of the scale to Hamano's, and whose

softer and gentler touch seems to fit more comfortably in line with the gender stereotypes endemic to the pink genre. A former actress who made her debut in 1993 in Toshiki Satô's *Petting Lesbian: Erogenous Zone* (director's title, *Naomi*), her résumé also includes Akio Jissôji's generously-budgeted adaptation of the Edogawa Rampo mystery *The D-Slope Murder Case* (1998) alongside her numerous pink roles. She herself starred in her 1996 debut *Chronic Ruttng Adultery Wife*.

Directing predominantly for Ôkura Eiga, many of Yoshiyuki's films centre around the hopes and desires of a new generation of modern-day city girls caught between quandaries of yearning for dependence, emotional fulfilment, stability and parental expectation. This is also true of many of her male contemporaries, but what distinguishes Yoshiyuki is her attention to detail. According to those who have worked on her films, she is meticulous when it comes to portraying the environment inhabited by her protagonists, for example taking the utmost care to ensure that every ornament in a girl's bedroom would be exactly as the character would have chosen, in order to lend their world a greater degree of authenticity.

Yoshiyuki's most well known film is *Innocent Kiss*, released originally into pink theatres in 1997 as *Sisters Donburi* (a *donburi* is a bowl of rice with various appetising goodies piled on top). Male-female relationships and the dividing line between love and friendship are the focus of this tale about Yôko, a worker at a cinema ticket booth co-habiting with her long-term sweetheart from her university days, who is now working as a downtrodden salaryman. In the meantime, she has managed to continue a more relaxed and empathetic relationship with another male friend, Takashi. This fragile equilibrium is ruined when her younger sister, the shrill-voiced Nana, lures Takashi to a love hotel, inflaming jealous passions within Yôko and plunging her into doubts about her forthcoming marriage.

Though made and released outside the world of pink production, the straight-to-video erotic drama *Feeling Just Like Bardot* (2001) is another typical work from the director. Miki is a 27-year-old OL living alone in Tokyo and embroiled in a complicated affair with her married boss. Abandoned to the sidelines once too often by her lover, she is left with only her handsome cocktail-shaking neighbour Takeda to provide a shoulder to cry on when her mother suddenly dies. As she is haunted by the reproachful spectre of this strict matriarch, she soon starts to question her own set of values and the direction in which her life is heading. Given the rather dainty and restrained nature of this tale, it comes as some surprise to discover that not only was the film produced by Kazuo 'Gaira' Komizu, but that the *Entrails of a Virgin* director is also credited as co-scriptwriter.

These are but a few of the more prominent women directors who have plied their trade at one time or

another in the *pinku eiga* world, but scratch the surface and one can find plenty more. After a successful career appearing in a string of highly-regarded titles from world-renowned directors – for example: Shôhei Imamura's *Profound Desire of the Gods* (1968); Akira Kurosawa's *Dodesukaden* (1970); Tomu Uchida's *Swords of Death* (1971); and Seijun Suzuki's *Heat Haze Theatre* (1981) – actress Hideko Okiyama served up the appetising-sounding *A Woman Like a Grapefruit* for Pro Taka in 1981. Two other actresses with closer ties to the pink industry, Keiko Hama and Maria Satsuki, made a couple of films in the early '80s: Hama made *Molester Travel Lodge Sleeping Huddled Together* (1980) and *College Girl Secret Floor Exercise* (1980),⁴⁰⁶ while Satsuki made *Perverved Young Wife Torture* (1983) and *Single Girl: Finger for a Lonely Night* (1984). Moe Sakura, the star of Takahisa Zeze's gloomy *Raigyo* (1997) not only went on to perform in over 60 pink films and erotic videos, but also made a number of films of her own during the early years of the new millennium, all released by Xces with standard titles like *Mature Women Teasers: Debauchery Training* (2002). Her directing career began with the third part of the omnibus movie *Married Wife Adultery Foolishness: Mother-in-Law, Widow, Cheating Wife* (2001), in which each segment was both directed by and starred a particular pink actress. While Sakura took the *Cheating Wife* story, Satomi Shinozaki directed the *Mother-in-Law* segment, and the *Widow* section was the work of Masami Ogawa.

A significant number of former performers from the Adult Video industry have also found their niche as directors, including Kyôko Aizome, the star of Tetsuji Takechi's 1981 *Daydream* remake. Alongside directing AV and writing a number of sex manuals exhorting Japanese women to assert more control in the bedroom, she also directed several pink films to capitalise upon her celebrity, most of whose titles – like *Continuation: Kyôko Aizome's G-Sensation Ultimate Edition* (2002) and *Kyôko Aizome vs. Eri Kikuchi Double G-Spot* (2003) – make some reference to her well-aired nether regions. Keiko Arisugawa is another early AV idol, this time launched through Nikkatsu's *The Real Performance (Za Honban)* videos from the mid-'80s Roman 'X' straight-to-video range. She took a solitary stab at directing, with *Sex Sensation Full Throttle Woman for Million* in 1986.

Unsurprisingly, the AV business has also launched the careers of many of the pink film's repertory of performers. Yumika Hayashi, who – due to her perky onscreen persona and her incredibly youthful good looks – became one of the most popular adult film actresses throughout much of the '90s, made her AV debut in 1988, going on to appear in almost 200 such works. She also made a similar number of credited film appearances in pictures by directors including Hisayasu Satô (*Birthday*), Meike Mitsuru (*Bitter Sweet*) and Shinji Imaoka (*Lunch Box*). Hayashi was tragically discovered

dead in her apartment on 28 June, 2005, having choked on her own vomit after returning home from her 35th birthday celebrations. Her death was front-page news in some of the evening papers, and a number of Tokyo's pink theatres commemorated her life with screenings of her films. Her final movie appearance was in Yumi Yoshiyuki's *Miss Peach: Peachy Sweetness Huge Breasts* (2005), released posthumously in September of the same year. Hayashi also had been the subject of a 1997 documentary, directed by and co-starring AV-maker Katsuyuki Hirano, entitled quite simply *Yumika Hayashi*, which was structured around a road trip undertaken by the couple to the extreme north of Japan, and for which the actress herself received a shooting credit. (Concerned that she hadn't turned up to work for a few days, it was Hirano who discovered the starlet's dead body when he visited her apartment along with an AV production associate and Hayashi's mother).

Not all pink stars are drawn from the AV world, as we can see from the case of Hotaru Hazuki, who has balanced her screen appearances in sex films with serious stage work. As well as being one of the most familiar faces in '90s pink cinema since her debut in Takahisa Zeze's *Modern Story About Bandits* (1993), Hazuki, born in 1970 as Sayoko Ishii, has also managed an off-screen career as part of the Suizokukan Gekijô (Aquarium Theatre) acting troupe (she uses her real name in her capacity as the troupe's co-organiser). This theatrical background is hardly unique, with Yutaka Ikejima and Keiko Niitaka – both originally from Shûji Terayama's Tenjô Sajiki troupe – providing two further examples.

But let us not get the impression that the pink industry is a huge phallocentric entity whose style and substance has slowly been moulded over the years by a handful of remarkable but nevertheless isolated individuals. Central to the emergence of the Four Devils, central to the company Kokuei's persistent efforts to search out new audiences distinct from those frequenting the ailing pink exhibition circuit, and central to the idea that the genre is conducive to a certain degree of experimentation, there lies one solitary figure. The name on the posters, Daisuke Asakura, is a masculine one, though it is an open secret that it is an alias, behind which hides one of the most influential figures in the industry. The person in question is in fact a woman, commonly known as Keiko Satô, but to all those who work with her, more affectionately referred to as *o-nêsan*, or 'Big Sister'.

When the current president of Kokuei first entered the company in 1962, a lifelong career making pornographic films was not entirely what she had envisaged. She had originally arrived in Tokyo from her birthplace in Hokkaido to study teaching, but after graduation, unable to find a suitable job, she worked for a while as an accountant. She joined Kokuei, of which her father was one of the three co-owners, in 1962, in

the midst of a crisis after most of its employees had been arrested on charges of obscenity, due to the company bypassing Eirin and distributing a number of striptease films (this was before it had started producing its own *eroduction* films). Satô immediately came in to help out with administrative duties during this turbulent period, but after the smoke had cleared she stayed on to work in the office, and eventually became a producer for Kaoru Umezawa's 1965 debut, *Moan of a Teenager*.

The male pseudonym of Daisuke Asakura, when spoken aloud using the Japanese name order of Asakura Daisuke, is a pun resting on the words 'Asa kara daisuki', meaning 'big love from the morning'. It was shared originally by a number of producers at Kokuei, including Kazuyoshi Yamoto, the son of Kokuei's founder Teruo Yamoto. It was Kazuyoshi Yamoto who had initially driven the more artistically motivated side of the company, but when he sadly succumbed to cancer at a young age in 1982, Keiko Satô continued running the company with the same ethos.

The support that Satô lent to the young directors at Kokuei, to help them in pursuing their vision of doing something different within the sphere of the pink movie, cannot be underestimated. She has constantly discovered and backed new talent, forged new links with alternative exhibition outlets and striven to make Kokuei the unique enterprise that it is. Not only is this matriarchal powerhouse the most significant woman in the world of pink production, occupying the highest seat in the most consistently innovative of the five companies, her role within the larger world of Japanese film production should also not be ignored. It might be worth pointing out too though, that none of the directors supported by Kokuei have been women.

In contrast, the disproportionately large number of women directors who have made films for the company ENK is worth drawing attention to, but it should be said from the outset that ENK is by no means a typical pink production company. With its offices in the heart of Osaka, above its flagship cinema the Umeda Rose Theatre (Umeda Rôzu Gekijô), it is the only one of the major pink distributors to be based outside of Tokyo. More than this however, though ENK's output is relatively small in comparison with the likes of Xces and Shinto, it is remarkable in that it caters almost exclusively for a very specialist market – gay viewers.

This is a side of the pink film genre that has gone more or less unrecognised in the West, for obvious reasons perhaps. As Andrew Grossman acerbically points out in his review of two rare representative releases that have thus far made it to overseas shores, "because little withstands corporate cooption better than gay male erotica (at least for the moment), Japan's gay porn industry still remains a mostly forbidden fruit, and the list of available titles seems in no urgent danger of expanding."⁴⁰⁷ And yet, since the '80s, gay pink has

been a fairly conspicuous aspect of Japanese pink film production, with closer links to its heterosexual counterpart in terms of its makers and its performers than one might suspect.

The first feature film to explicitly acknowledge the existence of a gay subculture in Japan was Toshio Matsumoto's *Funeral Parade of Roses*, way back in 1969. This faux-documentary style depiction of its underground milieu populated by male prostitutes and drag queens was, like many of the films produced by ATG, a vibrant celebration of Shinjuku counterculture targeted at a young, intellectually curious audience. It was not intended as titillation, nor was it made explicitly for a gay audience, as at that time the potential for such a market had yet to be recognised.

Yet, over the course of the next decade or so, it became evident that such a market did in fact exist. In a society in which homosexuality was, by and large, kept invisible, many dark and dingy run-down provincial cinemas had become less than salubrious locales, and with their all-male clienteles, this was especially the case with pink theatres. As such, these locations became notorious pick up ('*nanpa*') zones for gay men. During the '70s, live strip shows had set a precedent for the gay equivalent of the pink film too.

It would appear that the first company to recognise this new potential audience were Toei Central Films who, on 11 December, 1982, released three films together, all directed by a man whose name can be read either as Yasuji Matsuura, Kôji Matsuura or Yasuharu Matsuura. For the sake of expediency I'll go with the first reading, although no other works are credited to this figure other than the three titles under discussion here: *Roses*, *the Sea and the Sun*; *The Constellation of Roses*; and *White Does*. Each film was produced by a different company – all of which usually made straight pink films – and they were distributed in a number of adult theatres in Tokyo and Osaka. Collectively, they were received positively enough to persuade some in the industry that there was a future in this particular strain of adult film.

And so, that same year, a former employee at Nikkatsu called Tatsurô Komada founded ENK, initially just as a theatre to screen films for exclusively gay audiences. What was initially screened at the venue is unclear, but the early box office takings were incredibly promising, and so the company began to commission new productions, made on the standard pink budgets of ¥3.5 million, to fill up their schedules. Soon, from this cinema and two others like it in Tokyo, a small network of independent venues sprang up across the country. The films were originally marketed as *bara-zoku eiga*, or 'Rose Tribe films', borrowing the label from the influential gay subculture magazine of the same name established the same year. Copyright issues soon forced ENK to drop the term however, and the films are now referred to more candidly as 'gay porno' (*gei poruno*). ENK is now run by Tatsurô Komada's son, Shinji.

It should be stressed that virtually none of the directors who made these gay pink films for ENK are themselves openly gay, with one notable exception being Hiroyuki Ôki, whom we shall encounter in more detail shortly. However, the film *Mansion of Roses: Passion of Men* – one of ENK's first two productions, released together as a double bill in the April of 1983 – was directed by a leading figure of the Japanese gay scene, Ken Tôgô. The film is little remembered today, because it has been overshadowed by the other film that it played alongside, Genji Nakamura's *Beautiful Mystery*. Unlike Nakamura's film, Tôgô's has not been released subsequently on video or DVD overseas, nor at home either, it would appear. Though he only ever had this one film credited to his name, Tôgô is worth more than a passing mention for his activities outside of the film world as a leading gay activist. Born 10 June, 1932, his achievements include being: the founding editor of *The Gay* magazine; the proprietor of the legendary Shinjuku Nichôme gay bar *Saturday*; and the first open homosexual in Japan to stand for election (after establishing the political party *Zatsumintô* – literally, the 'miscellaneous people party' – in 1983, he ran on several occasions for the lower house of parliament and also for the position of governor of Tokyo, losing on each occasion).⁴⁰⁸

Neither have most of the cast members of these films been gay, with figures that include Takeshi Kitano-stalwart Ren Ôsugi, and familiar figures like Yôta Kawase and Takeshi Itô drawn from the pool of regular pink performers. Several years before Tomorrow Taguchi, one of Japan's hardest-working movie actors, began making his name appearing in the early *jishu eiga* experiments of Shinya Tsukamoto, with the films *Phantom of Regular Size* (1986) and *The Adventure of Denchu Kozo* (1987) serving as dry runs for their breakthrough title *Tetsuo* (1989), one of his first credited movie appearances was in Kôji Kamota's *Give Me More Love* (1984).

In the early years, these films were predominantly helmed by directors better known for their straight pink films. Significantly, most who made ENK's first run of titles had some link with Nikkatsu. One of the first of the company's releases, the aforementioned *Beautiful Mystery* (the original Japanese title, *Kyokon densetsu: utsukishiki nazo*, which translates as *Legend of the Giant Cock: Beautiful Mystery*, was rather more forthright about its intentions) was, as previously mentioned, directed by Genji Nakamura and produced through his own company, Yû Pro, which had many of its films released alongside Nikkatsu's in the early '80s. This was followed by three films made in rapid succession by his protégé at Yû Pro, Ryûichi Hiroki: *Our Generation* (1983); *Our Season* (1983); and *Our Moment* (1985). Similarly, several of the directors came from another company with links to Nikkatsu, Kan Mukai's Shishi Pro, including Yôjirô Takita (who made *Goodbye Boy* in 1984), and Hisayasu Satô. The



above: The Mishima myth debunked: Tatsuya Nagatomo in one of Japan's first gay porno titles, *Beautiful Mystery* (1983), directed by Genji Nakamura. ©ENK

only figure directing exclusively for ENK who lives and works from Osaka is Jô Kenzaki, who debuted in 1991 with *Smell of Ice Cream* and has made around sixteen films for the company, including *See You Again: Hiroshima Story* (1994), *Easygoing* (1997), and *Easygoing 2: Let's Get Happy!* (2003).

ENK's output has not been exclusively made up of titles for this niche market. As well as a hundred or so gay porno titles, during the '80s the company also produced fifteen straight pink films at the request of Nikkatsu, to occupy the lower part of its Roman Porno programs. One of these, *Adultery* (1986), came from former Nikkatsu director Chûsei Sone. During their most fruitful years, ENK kept up a production output of, on average, four titles a year, a relatively small figure compared with most other pink production houses, though there is an obvious reason behind this; namely that the exhibition network is comparatively limited. At the industry's peak, there were around ten specialist independent cinemas as well as ENK's own Umeda Rose Theatre in Osaka, and the Ôkura Production-owned World Masterpiece Theatre (Sekai Kessaku Gekijô) in Ueno in Tokyo, which was the largest specialist gay erotica cinema in the country. The number of independent venues has now dropped to seven.

As the Ôkura theatre clearly demonstrates, ENK is competing in this small market with a far larger player. With greater financial reserves at their disposal, Ôkura certainly has the edge over ENK in terms of the number of titles it is able to produce. In 2003, ENK made only two of the six titles produced and distributed in gay cinemas

in Japan. The rest were all made by Ôkura, who in the same year released 36 straight pink films. In 2004, ENK made absolutely nothing, while Ôkura boasted several titles, including Yumi Yoshiyuki's *Just When I Need You Most*, an office drama revolving around a bungling new company employee and his high-powered boss. At such a level, it is unclear where ENK's future lies as a production company, and it might currently be best described as in hibernation.

Just as with normal pink theatres, in order to attract a regular stream of customers, the gay venues must change their schedules on a frequent basis. ENK's own Umeda Rose Theatre, for example, shows a programme consisting of two movies that changes once every four weeks. Clearly, there are not enough new films to support this, so the bulk of the films exhibited are re-titled re-releases of older productions. The shortfall is also made up of gay-themed foreign releases, which recently has included Thai director Youngyooth Thongkonthun's drama from 2000 about a transvestite volleyball team, *Iron Ladies* (released in Japan as *Attack Number Half*), and Larry Clark's *Ken Park* (2002).

The reason for this rapid decline in gay pink production is rather complicated, but owing to the tiny network of specialist theatres, the industry is particularly vulnerable to reduced theatre attendances at any one individual venue. The Achilles heel in this instance appears to have been Ôkura's Ueno theatre. As the most important and profitable cinema in the exhibition chain, it has always served as the flagship venue for this flimsy sub-industry. Just after the turn of the millennium, the first-floor screen above the basement theatre where the gay pink films are screened was spruced up, and now shows second-run Hollywood movies. By all accounts this renovation resulted in increased attendances by mainstream viewers to the upstairs venue, which drove away the core audiences of the gay venue, who perhaps understandably wished to retain some degree of anonymity.

As might be indicated by the previously mentioned imported titles screened in the Umeda Rose Theatre, and the fact that the gay cinemas function more as meeting points than places to actually watch films, the gay pink film tends to provide a largely more flexible medium in which to work than the straightforward sex film, which is bound by such unwritten conventions as a sex or nude scene every ten minutes or so. To put it more straightforwardly, if none of the audiences of the traditional pink film are really paying attention to the film, then this is doubly so for gay pink. Censorship, as usual, plays a part in all this. With full-frontal nudity and genital depictions barred, scenes of homosexual activity are limited to bulges beneath Y-fronts, oiled torsos and thrusting buttocks, begging the question of what purpose these films are made for in the first place. The conclusion has to be mainly to fill up screen space.

It is precisely for this reason that the director Hisayasu Satô has expressed a preference for this type of film: there is considerably more liberty to explore the onscreen possibilities, and if there are restrictions, they are mainly down to budgetary constraints. As Shinji Komada confirms: "There's not such strict guidelines in gay as in straight pink. We usually discuss with the director what they want to do beforehand, but essentially they get a pretty free rein as to what they can do."⁴⁰⁹

This 'anything goes' tradition in the gay pink film stretches right back to one of the two titles first released by ENK, Genji Nakamura's *Beautiful Mystery*. The world of pink, shielded from the general public's view as it was, had always fostered its share of subversives eagerly taken to lampooning the more sacrosanct aspects of Japanese culture and tradition. Gay porn fell even further beneath the critical radar. Nakamura's film presents a scurrilous caricature of the infamous novelist Yukio Mishima and his paramilitary entourage, founded in 1968 and known as the 'Shield Society' (*Tate no kai*), as well as the sensitive events leading up to his thwarted *coup d'état* and gruesome ritual suicide on 25 November, 1970.

Celebrated both at home and abroad throughout the first part of his career for the beautifully-written prose of novels such as *Forbidden Colours* (*Kinjiki*, 1951), *The Sound of Waves* (*Shiosai*, 1954), and *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* (*Kinkakuji*, 1956), by the late '60s Mishima had gone off the rails, recruiting for himself a private army of well-muscled young men with whom he trained. He directed and starred in *Patriotism* (aka *The Rite of Love and Death*, 1966), a highly-aestheticised 28-minute film, set to the strains of Wagner, that celebrated the ritual suicide of Lieutenant Shinji Takeyama following the *ni-ni-roku* incident of 1936 and which anticipated Mishima's own demise. He also advocated a return to the good old days of militarism, emperor worship and the Bushido code of honour in books like *The Samurai Ethic and Modern Japan: Introduction to Hagakure* (*Hagakure nyûmon*, 1966).

Mishima's homosexuality and narcissistic body worship are aspects of his persona barely mentioned in his own country, and the events surrounding his suicide are still treated as a fairly taboo topic in the public forum. Paul Schrader's 1985 biopic *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* has yet to be circulated in Japan to this day, while *Patriotism* was finally released on DVD in 2006, having never been screened or legitimately available in the country since its director's ignoble expiration. Nevertheless, Mishima's final days provided rich pickings for a filmmaker coming from a field that has traditionally been on the other side of the political spectrum. Shooting from a script written by Rokurô Mochizuki, *Beautiful Mystery* follows the adventures of Shinohara, a young man who, while working out in a gym, is approached by right-wing revolutionary Takizawa and immediately whisked off to a training

camp overseen by a thinly-disguised stand-in for the writer, named Mitani (played by Ren Ôsugi). Here he is instructed in the way of the warrior and all its flagrant red-blooded machismo by way of ritual buggeries and *seppuku* rehearsals. Come the dawn of the revolution however, Shinohara and Takizawa both miss their early morning alarm call, thus avoiding the resulting bloodbath of the failed coup. The final scenes see them both dressed in drag and serving as hostesses in a transvestite bar.

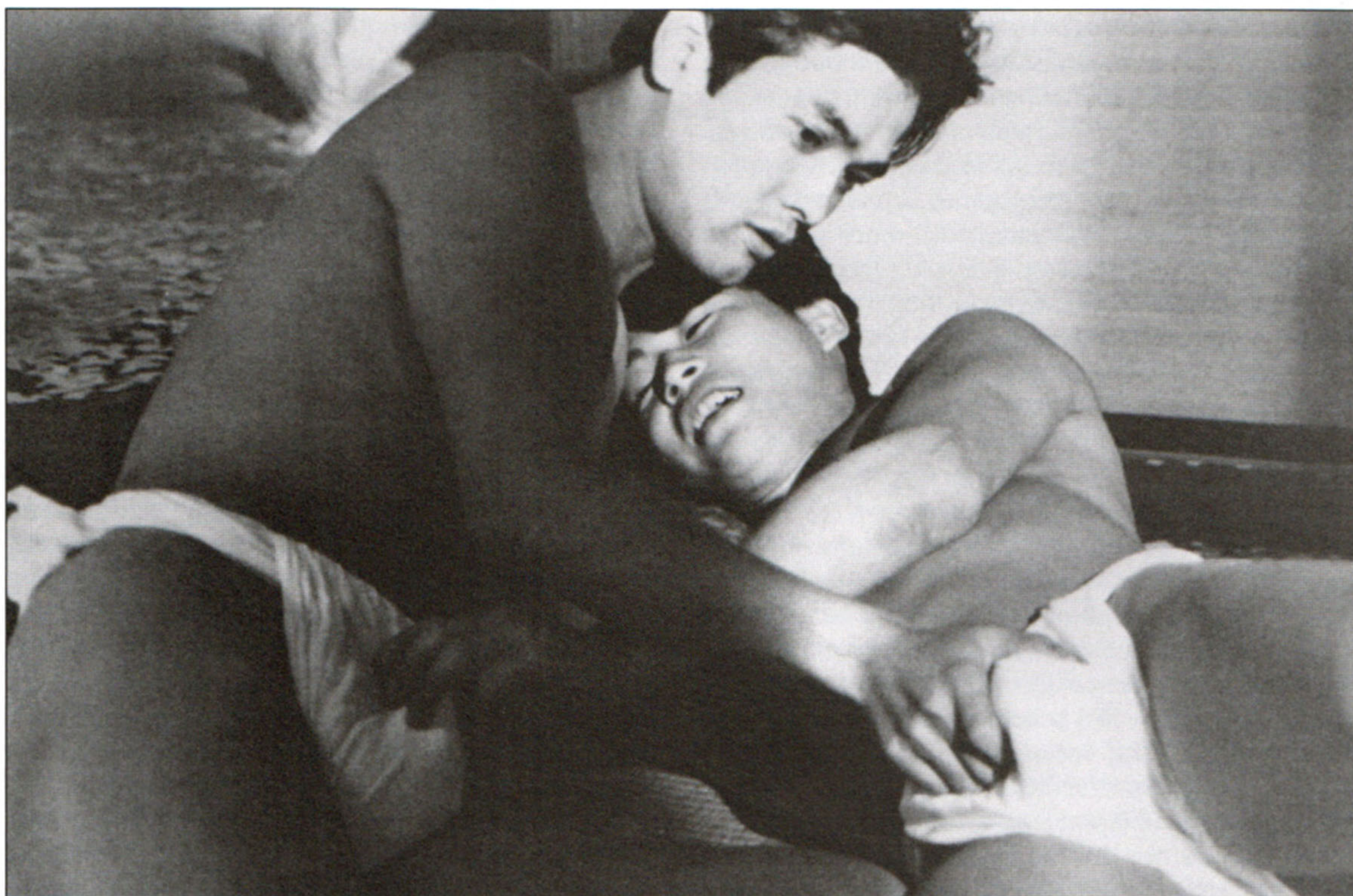
As far as a cinematic cementation of the Mishima legend goes, the gleefully irreverent *Beautiful Mystery* would surely not have amused its notoriously dour subject matter. Tony Rayns hits the nail on the head when he states, "Nakamura's film prefers the gay-bar legend to the fact, and manages to generate much erotic pleasure while demolishing the high-mindedness of Mishima's pretensions. I doubt that any other new genre has ever been launched with more flair."⁴¹⁰

This willingness of the gay porno film to tackle subject matter that would have proven impossible in either mainstream or straight pink movies at the time can be gauged from another of the first string of releases from 1983, again starring Ren Ôsugi and scripted by Rokurô Mochizuki. *Our Season* tells the story of two gay men who want to raise a child together. Their prayers seem answered when, one day, they meet a pregnant woman who offers to let them adopt her illegitimate child after it is born, before later going back on her decision and claiming it back. It

would be years before a similar storyline, acknowledging the desires of gay men to raise families, would be taken up in a mainstream picture, in Ryôsuke Hashiguchi's *Hush!* (2001).

The genre also provided more room for stylistic manoeuvring than the generally more conservative world of straight pink. Hiroyuki Ôki, one of the figures most often associated with the field due to his 1994 film *I Like You, I Like You Very Much*, came from an experimental filmmaking background. In fact, he made very little for pink theatres. His only other title for ENK was the 1996 film *Ball Play*, though he did also make one straight pink film for Kokuei, entitled *Tears of Ecstasy*, which featured the actresses Hotaru Hazuki and Kiyomi Itô. Itô also co-wrote the screenplay with the director, in what must count as one of the most formalistically experimental entries the genre has ever seen – the film consists of 60 shots, each 60 seconds in length!

Tears of Ecstasy was released in 1995, the same year Ôki's earlier films were screened alongside those of the Four Devils and Naomi Kawase at the Athénée Française. Actually, Kawase, the maker of such earnest confessional pieces as *Embracing* (1992) and *Katatsumori* (1994), is probably the best point of reference when trying to describe Ôki's work. Much of his previous films had been shot on Super-8 or 16mm film and took the form of personal diaries, with the director relegated to the role of off-screen alter ego, the physical presence behind the camera only intimated through his voice, and images of his hands and legs intruding into the frame.



above: Japanese censorship laws don't give much room for manoeuvre for gay porno filmmakers, as can be seen in this training camp scene from *Beautiful Mystery* (1983). ©ENK



above: *Muscle* (1989), starring Takeshi Itô and Shimon Kumai, presents a typically vicious view of same-sex relationships in keeping with the work of its director Hisayasu Satô, and of the genre as a whole. ©ENK

Born in 1964, Ôki originally studied architecture at Tokyo University. During his vacations he had a part-time job at a mountain lodge, which is where he first started exploring the medium of film in 8mm works including *The Truth of Desire* (1984) and *The Travelling Schoolroom* (1986). This latter is described by its maker as, "simply a series of landscape shots, without a story". After this, he spent a brief period studying filmmaking at Image Forum, Tokyo's bastion of avant-garde cinema. But going against the grain of the majority of his experimental filmmaking contemporaries supported by this institution, Ôki's work was informed as much by fictional narratives as formalist investigation. Around this period, he made *Swimming Prohibited* (1989) and *Infection* (1990) in the personal diary style.⁴¹¹

With such a background, it is hardly surprising that *I Like You, I Like You Very Much* – Ôki's first work for ENK, which follows the relationship between two young queers named Kô and Shin – in Tony Rayns's words "represents a compromise of sorts between his own experimental aesthetic and the demands of the genre."⁴¹² Andrew Grossman was more critical: "the film's anguished, murky camerawork and elliptical narrative work to obscure a paper napkin screenplay with a front of avant-gardism. Ôki's directorial style too much resembles a film school graduation thesis, with arbitrary jump cuts, seemingly improvised dialogue, and a jiggling cinema vérité camera passing for experimentalism."⁴¹³ Different strokes for different folks, one might surmise, but the fact is that *I Like You, I Like You Very Much* is hardly the representative face of theatrical

Japanese gay porn. In fact, *Ball Play*, and appearances in Jô Kenzaki's *Easygoing* (1997) and Akihiro Suzuki's *Pleasure Garden of Angels* (1999) aside, Ôki kept himself conspicuously absent from the gay cottage industry represented by ENK, while his only other credit in the straight pink industry outside of *Tears of Ecstasy* is an intriguing one for the music in Rei Sakamoto's *3 Balls, 1 Strike*, made for Kokuei in 1999. During the mid-'90s, in the numerous overseas screenings and retrospectives of his work held at the Berlin, Vancouver, Rotterdam and London Gay and Lesbian film festivals, it is unsurprising that it was his more experimental endeavours that received the most emphasis.

While Ôki's films are mostly based on personal impressions and experiences, in truth, much of the output of ENK was as fantastical and divorced from reality as that of the straight pink industry. If these films had laid themselves open to criticism for the often rough treatment the female characters received at the hands of men, the violence contained within them seems relatively restrained compared to gay porno's images of man-on-man brutality, rough sado-masochistic lovemaking and frequent scenes of violent sexual assault. To pick but one of ENK's most highly-regarded titles as an example, Yukio Kitazawa's *I Thought About You* (1997) follows the investigation of two gay detectives who are drawn into a new case after witnessing an unflinchingly brutal recording of a gang rape on a videotape that is sent to their office. For most viewers, gay or straight, the grainy images on the tape will probably prove hard to take.

With this in mind, it should no be a surprise to discover that Hisayasu Satô found himself particularly at home making gay porno films. In the five works he directed in the field – *Temptation of the Mask* (1987), *Intoxication Game* (1989), *Muscle* (1989), *Hunter's Sense of Touch* (1995), and *The Fetist: Hot Breath* (1998)⁴¹⁴ – the director was able to indulge his stylistic experimentations and predilections for violence to the full.

Satô's first two films for ENK were both written by Shirô Yumeno – as were his other films from the period. *Temptation of the Mask*, whose name might possibly be a reference to Mishima's novel *Confessions of a Mask* (*Kamen no kokuhaku*, 1949), is particularly interesting in that it sees three of the Four Devils assembled together in one production; Kazuhiro Sano stars while Takahisa Zeze serves in the capacity of assistant director (and can be briefly glimpsed in a thankless cameo as a member of an oversexed lynch mob). A future major player in the industry is also present, in the form of Yutaka Ikejima, then a prolific actor of both pink and AV but later to become a significant director in his own right. A rather slow and melancholy piece, it begins with troubled teenager Takashi setting fire to the house of his sister and brother-in-law, under whose custody he dwells. Sano's macho detective is called in to investigate, conducting his investigation by way of a game of

Russian Roulette, and discovers not only that Takashi harboured a particularly unbrotherly strain of affection for his sister, but also suffered systematic abuse from her new husband. Subjected to a series of nightly visitations by his ward, dressed in nothing more than a metallic mask and a pair of bulging underpants, over time the traumatised youth develops a confused sense of sexual values, ones readily exploited by his investigator.

Satô's *Muscle* represents one of the few Japanese gay porn films released in the West. It also has to rank as one of the most delirious items the pink genre – gay or otherwise – has ever produced, focusing on an extremely sadomasochistic relationship between a Butoh dancer and the photographer of a magazine chockfull of images of bodybuilding hunks. Their violent love bouts soon escalate from savage acts involving knives and pads of butter to greater extremes, reaching crisis point when the photographer chops off his younger lover's arm with a samurai sword, the act framed, with Satô's inimitable verve, through the viewfinder of a still camera. It is enough to put a dampener on the relationship, with the photographer sent off to jail for a year, then returning to pine alone in his empty apartment, with his lover's arm in a pickling jar by his bedside, before he too mutilates himself and the couple are reunited in a final surreal masked ball sequence.

Both of these films, true to Satô's usual form, feature more than their fair share of shocking moments, though the manner in which they are presented is as striking, composed and emotionally detached as any of the other fascinating works in the director's oeuvre. Occasionally however, the imagery seems just that little bit too arty and precious: Ikejima practicing archery clad in a Roman toga, and a number of allusions to the artist Egon Schiele in *Temptation of the Mask*; the hypnotic interludes of avant-garde Butoh dance routines in *Muscle*, and the recurrent references to Pasolini as the protagonist attempts to track down a compatible video deck with which to play an imported tape of *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom*.

Hisayasu Satô's connection to the gay porno filmmaking world is not just limited to the films he himself directed. In 2000, he also produced *Sabaku*,⁴¹⁵ the sole work of a director going under the name of Kajino, which again featured Kazuhiro Sano in the lead role (in fact, it's safe to assume that this was Kô Kajino, an actor and assistant director on a number of Sano and Satô's earlier films). Sano's apparent willingness to perform in both gay and straight porn films, not to mention the eroticised gaze he affords both his own body and those of his male leads in the films he directs himself (for example, in the transvestite sex scene featuring Kôichi Imaizumi in *Don't Let It Bring You Down*), highlights that the gay and hetero strands within pink film production are not as disparate as one might imagine.

This is not only clear from the number of directors who have worked in both genres, but also from a few isolated cases of the women who have made films for ENK, and again, the link seems to be Hisayasu Satô. Besides appearing in most of this director's films (including two of his four gay titles), Kiyomi Itô sat on the other side of the camera lens just one time, for the first section in the gay omnibus movie *The Gays in Wonderland* (1997), entitled *Echika*. Furthermore, the third episode, *Nursing at Home*, was the sole work as a director of Kyôko Godai, who is better known for the large number of scripts she wrote for Satô (though she also wrote Yoshiyuki's *Innocent Kiss*). The second entry, *The Beast Who Screamed 'Love' in the Middle of a Movie*, was also directed by a woman, one can assume, though the name listed as director, Keiko Sorbonne, doesn't appear to have any other films credited to it. (Talking of women who have made gay pink films, it is worth also mentioning now Sachi Hamano's 1990 film for ENK, *Blazing Men*).

This crossover between straight and gay pink even seems to exist at the fan level. The annual Best Ten as chosen by the readers of *PG* magazine have often featured gay films from both ENK and Ôkura Eiga. In 1995, the year *Rafureshia*, Satô's penultimate film for Kokuei, was released and voted to the number nine position, his gay film *Hunter's Sense of Touch* ranked above it, at number four. (Though in many ways a conventional pink work, Satô's uncharacteristic foray into comedy with *Rafureshia* presents a curiously gay worldview, with two of its protagonists – coincidentally played by Yumi Yoshiyuki and Kôichi Imaizumi – initially depicted as existing uncomfortably within somewhat stifling and dysfunctional family units, trading places and finding freedom within same-sex pairings at the denouement. Toshiki Satô's *Apartment Wife: Adulterous Passion*, winner of the first P-1 Grand Prix tournament held in 2000, which will be looked at in the following chapter, concluded with a same-sex partner swap among two couples.) In 1996, *PG*'s Best Ten featured two gay works: Yutaka Ikejima's *Love Me Danger* at number 6, and Takumei Higuchi's *Eighteen Years Old* at number 8.

Given the mixture of sexes who make up the viewers at such events as those hosted by *PG* magazine – a secondary audience unlikely to congregate to watch the films *in situ* in either gay or straight pink theatres – the blurring of boundaries between homosexual and heterosexual fantasy in both types of film is perhaps unsurprising. Ian Buruma has pointed out the prevalence of homosexual themes in girls' comics, or *shôjo manga*, in his book *A Japanese Mirror*. "Possibly many young girls – and to a lesser extent young boys," he writes, "feeling that their natural inclinations are being slowly crushed by an adult world that forces them to be calculating and conformist, find an outlet in homosexual fantasies, too remote from their own lives to be threatening: a faraway romantic ideal like 'the Paris of our dreams'."⁴¹⁶



above: Kôichi Imaizumi's *Naughty Boys* (2001), a remake of Yumi Yoshiyuki's movie of the same name which he himself scripted, offers a more authentic look at gay life in Tokyo. ©Habakari Cinema

For male viewers, the cross-gender appreciation of gay pink alongside its straight counterpart in events such as these implies that admitting to being moved in some way by these films is not tantamount to proclaiming one's own homosexuality, as it might do in the West. Buruma continues, "Certainly it is less of a taboo in Japan than in the West. Homosexuality has never been treated as a criminal deviation or a sickness. It is a part of life, little discussed, and perfectly permissible if the rules of social propriety – getting married, for instance – are observed."

Societal attitudes to homosexuality in Japan have obviously changed since Buruma's book was published in 1984. If the PG events and the general discourse surrounding pink film suggest that gay films are not solely appreciated by gays, then it should also be pointed out that the very existence of gay cinemas, which would have only just been beginning at the time Buruma was writing, acknowledges that there is an exclusively homosexual market for such films. Still, the two markedly different exhibition contexts (of such specialist pink events and specialised gay theatres) can't help but raise the issue – and one which is equally pertinent to the straight pink film as well – of who exactly are these films aimed at?

In terms of putting forward a progressive view of homosexuality, gay porno has lagged considerably behind other filmmaking sectors in Japan, such as, for example, the experimental scene as represented by Hiroyuki Ôki, or the crucial appearance of more mainstream dramas with homosexual content, like Takehiro Nakajima's *Okoge* (1992), Jôji Matsuoka's *Twinkle* (1992), or *A Touch of Fever* (1993) and *Like Grains of Sand* (1995) directed by Pia Film Festival-discovery Ryôsuke Hashiguchi. In 1992, the Tokyo International Lesbian & Gay Film Festival (TIL&GFF) began. It has gone from strength to strength over the years, in its 14th year of 2005 bringing in a record-breaking 6500 viewers.

One figure quick to draw attention to gay porno's shortcomings is Kôichi Imaizumi, an openly gay actor who has appeared in well over a hundred pink films for both sides of the pink market, including many directed by Hisayasu Satô. According to Imaizumi, many of the gay porno titles made in Japan do not reflect the lives or experiences of their audiences at all, shot as they are by heterosexual directors as if they were making a normal straight film. Seeking to redress the balance, Imaizumi has been active writing scripts for several gay films directed by Yumi Yoshiyuki and released through Ôkura Eiga, including *The True Face of Virgin Boys* (1998),⁴¹⁷ *I Am Lost in Love* (1999), and *Naughty Boys* (2001).

Naughty Boys presents a particularly interesting case, in that there are actually two versions circulating; the one for gay pink theatres directed by Yoshiyuki and featuring Imaizumi as an actor, and another longer remake of his original script, re-shot by Imaizumi himself and produced through his Habakari-Cinema company.⁴¹⁸ This second version played at the 11th TIL&GFF festival in 2002 (as well as other similar festivals in Sydney, Budapest, Lisbon and Uppsala), and is markedly closer to the script that Imaizumi imagined as he was writing it. Both films focus on one night in the life of a gay couple, Gacchan and Takayuki, who split temporarily after an argument about Gacchan's promiscuity and individually embark on a series of encounters set around Tokyo's Shinjuku Ni-Chôme gay district.

The difference in the approach brought to the tale by the two directors is best expressed in a review by manga artist and illustrator Keiichi Takasaki on the new version's website: "In Japan, gay porn films aren't usually made by gay filmmakers or production staff. A straight production company backs the production, a straight director and straight staff do the shoot, and as a general rule the actors are straight too. On the other hand, gay porn videos for watching at home are usually produced by gay companies. In other words, for some reason or other there's a two-part system in place. Apparently, many aspects of the 'corporate version' (produced with and by a straight staff and cast) of *Naughty Boys* didn't sit well with screenwriter Imaizumi. I haven't actually seen the 'corporate version.' (They're hard to see if you don't catch them in the porn theatres.) But from what I've heard, it sounds like this version succeeded only too well in expressing many of the stereotypical images of 'homosexuality' held by so many straight Japanese. For example, the film's understanding of HIV, AIDS and safer sex is about ten years out of date. Shinjuku Ni-Chôme, Japan's biggest gay neighbourhood, appears as dark, repressed and isolated. And the scene set in a gay bar uses such closeted visual images that you'd think the story took place decades ago... Spurred by these dissatisfactions, Kôichi Imaizumi spent six months re-shooting the film that he wrote in his own way. Supportive gay and lesbian staff and cast members came together to work on it, and *Naughty Boys* was reborn as a film made

by, for and with gays and lesbians. As a result, the story itself is a cartoon with a pop sensibility and a fantastic turn, but the underlying world it depicts is truly real. My conclusion? Artistic expression that comes from first-hand experience of the world has the power to convey something real to others."⁴¹⁹

As well as acknowledging an entirely distinct larger industry of gay pornography produced by gays on video, this review of the Imaizumi version of *Naughty Boys* points to the fact that representations of gay life in theatrical pornography are rarely sincere. Until recent screenings at TIL&GFF of Yutaka Ikejima's *Men Who Love* (2002) and Yumi Yoshiyuki's *Just When I Need You Most* (2004), there was little crossover between the type of films that played at the festival and those produced by ENK and Ôkura, circulating the theatres, which to those outside the pink industry are seen as essentially little more than exploitation program pictures. The TIL&GFF programmers were also quick to see through the ruse of the hapless Shinto producer who submitted Osamu Satô's *Hard Lesbian: Quick and Deep* (2005). Despite its surprisingly earnest and sensitively-handled treatment of its tale of an Office Lady named Reiko who finds herself driven from the cut-and-thrust of male-dominated corporate life (manifested by her unsatisfactory sexual relationship with her co-worker fiancé and her daily gropings on the commuter train) into the arms of another woman she meets in a lesbian bar, when it came to shooting the bedroom scenes the makers clearly had a heterosexual audience in mind.

Imaizumi has subsequently moved on to making films more likely to please their target audience, producing the omnibus movie *Queer Boys and Girls on the Shinkansen* (2004) alongside Hiroki Iwasa, through their Habakari Cinema company. Announced as "ten queer short movies by ten queer directors", as well as shooting and editing several of the entries, Imaizumi directed the segment *I Want You to Kiss Me*, described as a 'mockumentary' about a man ordering a rent boy.⁴²⁰

The gay porno film as represented by the ENK product of the '80s and '90s may well be coming to the end of its current line. An expansion in alternative venues, the gradual mainstreaming of gay subculture and the rise of video production have all taken their toll on the cinema admissions that have provided the very means for these films to be produced. To put it simply, the market for gay theatrical works can barely sustain itself. But most importantly, it is clear that the producers of these films have been severely at odds with the desires of their audiences and this, it would seem, is not a problem unique to the gay pink film.

Footnotes

³⁹⁵ Ma, Karen. *The Modern Madame Butterfly: Fantasy and Reality in Japanese Cross-Cultural Relationships*. pg 53.

³⁹⁶ The original Ladies Theatre broadband line-up can be found at www.aii.co.jp/go/lady.html (last accessed 14 August, 2004).

³⁹⁷ Interview with Zeze on Midnight Eye. Ibid.

³⁹⁸ The 'Dig the Pink' website at www.pin-pon.hp.infoseek.co.jp began in 2000. For much of its existence it was run by one person, and I can confirm that this is most certainly not a man masquerading as a woman – I've met the editor and main writer, though for perhaps obvious reasons she prefers to remain anonymous.

³⁹⁹ Ishihara, Ikuko. "Segregation and Participation: A Female Perspective on Pink Films and Romantic Porn." Planet Eros: New Japanese Independent Cinema. HKIFF. pg 42.

⁴⁰⁰ One notable female Director of Photography is Akiko Ashizawa, who has shot a number of well-received commercial films including Kunitoshi Manda's *Unloved* (2001), and Kiyoshi Kurosawa's *Loft* (2005) and *Retribution* (2006). As well as working on a number of *jishu eiga* and documentaries credits include shooting Yôichi Nishiyama's pink film *Wet Hot Saké* (1996) and Hisayasu Satô's gorgeous-looking V-cinema films *In the Thicket* (1996) and *Naked Blood* (1996).

⁴⁰¹ Much of the information in this chapter comes from Domenig, Roland. "Women in Pink Eiga." Paper given at the conference 'Female Japanese Filmmakers' at the University of Colorado in Boulder in October 2000.

⁴⁰² *Seijin Eiga*, December 1965, pg 9. (text: "Uso janaiyo, goran no tôri... Joryû kantoku Ôgimachi Kyôko no tanjô").

⁴⁰³ The *ko* character meaning 'child' is often used in girls' names.

⁴⁰⁴ This is according to her biography in Kinema Junpô's *Illustrated Who's Who of Japanese Cinema: Directors* (pg 648) and the information in her own book. The online Japanese Movie Database, which takes its information from the catalogues of *Kinema Junpô* magazine, states that this film was released two years later in September 1972, and her debut entitled *Woman's Body Delicacy* was released in February 1972.

⁴⁰⁵ The original Japanese title, *Yaritai Hitozuma*, literally means "housewives who want to do it", but "greedy", or even "voracious" more clearly expresses the intentions behind what is portrayed.

⁴⁰⁶ *Yuka* for floor can also be read as *toko* for bed: the traditional Japanese style bed on the tatami flooring.

⁴⁰⁷ Grossman, Andrew. "Beautiful Mystery & I Like You ... I Like You Very Much on DVD." *Bright Lights Film Journal*. www.brightlightsfilm.com/35/pinkfilms.html

⁴⁰⁸ My gratitude to Roland Domenig to drawing my attention to Tôgô, his film and his life. A fuller biography can be found in his entry on the Japanese Wikipedia.

⁴⁰⁹ Interview with author. Unpublished.

⁴¹⁰ Rayns, Tony. "Japan: Sex and Beyond." *Sight and Sound* June 1995. pg 26-29.

⁴¹¹ See interview with Gerow, Aaron in *Documentary Box #11*. www.yidff.jp/docbox/11/box11-2-e.html.

⁴¹² Rayns. Ibid. pg 29.

⁴¹³ Grossman, Andrew. *Beautiful Mystery & I Like You ... I Like You Very Much on DVD*. Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ "Fetist", as opposed to "fetishist", is a direct translation from the katakana of the original Japanese title.

⁴¹⁵ Depending on the characters used, *sabaku* can be a noun meaning 'desert' or a verb meaning 'to try, adjudicate, judge', although the title here is written in both the roman alphabet, and using the *kanji* characters *sa* for 'chains' or 'irons' and *baku*, meaning 'bound' or 'restrained' (as in *kinbaku*, 'tightly bound'), to give the alternative meaning 'bound in chains'.

⁴¹⁶ Buruma, Ian. *A Japanese Mirror: Heroes and Villains in Japanese Culture*. pg 127.

⁴¹⁷ *Otome* usually refers only to females and means a virgin girl or unmarried woman – it is written in this title with the character for male ('otoko') instead of female ('onna') – while *sugao* means a face with no makeup.

⁴¹⁸ This is the version available on DVD from the UK company Parasol Peccadillo.

⁴¹⁹ Review by Keiichi Takasaki on www.shiroari.com/habakari/naughtyboys.htm

⁴²⁰ See description at www.tokyo-igff.org/2004/e/t_japanese_short.html

上映作品

手錠(ロスト・ヴァージン やみつき援助交際)2002 団地の奥さん、同窓会に行く 2004 にぎって(OL性白書 くされ縁)2000 お弁当(熟女・発情 タマしゃぶり)2004 姉妹OL 抱きしめたい 2001 耳を澄ます夏(痴漢電車 さわってびっくり!)2001 夜明けの牛(痴漢義父 息子の嫁と…)2003 宙ぶらりん(SEX配達人 おんな届けます)2003 21st century girl(18才 下着の中のうずき)2001 セコハン・ラヴ(多淫OL 朝まで抜かないで)2000 花井さちこの華麗な生涯(発情家庭教師 先生の愛汁)＜ディレクターズ・カット＞2004 トーキョー×エロティカ Tokyo×Erotica(トーキョー×エロティカ 痺れる快楽)2001

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会場:アテネ・フランセ文化センター(御茶ノ水)

21st Century Girl and the Seven Lucky Gods

In the living room of a sparsely decorated house tucked away in an anonymous residential area in the suburbs of Tokyo, four dispirited figures passively lie down in a row on the bare *tatami* after collectively resolving to bring an end to their woes by inhaling gas. Their numbers include a battered housewife, an ostracised high school girl, a morose young man working as a minimum-wage *furita* ('free arbeiter', i.e. part-time jobber) employee at a curry restaurant, and a maker of *hanko* (the personalised signatory stamp used in Japan), feeling unloved, unwanted and exasperated at the state of the world, as manifested by the constant television broadcasts of the war raging simultaneously in Iraq. A fifth member of their party, a burnt-out AV actress frequently subjected to violent beatings by her director boyfriend, had previously ended it all prematurely by slashing her wrists in the bathtub. As the first fumes slowly reach their nostrils, the couples reach out their hands to one another in united acceptance of their imminent fate. Their bodies draw closer together and they pair off to form couples. Their soft caresses escalate to hungry kisses. Within moments the room has transformed into turbulent ocean of writhing naked flesh. At the point of climax, one of them jumps up to

turn off the gas tap. The figures begin to shudder uncontrollably in a mixture of relief and orgasmic bliss. Newly awakened to their physicality, and all feelings of disconnection dissipated, they rise to face the light of the dawning day.

Back in the real world, the handful of viewers still seated in the disingenuously named Shinjuku Kokusai Gekijō (Shinjuku International Theatre) stifle yawns between taking slugs from beer cans, chewing idly on pieces of dried squid, and lighting cigarettes. A dishevelled-looking *o-jisan* (old man) rummages around noisily in a carrier bag, seemingly unstirred by what he has just seen. Few titles demonstrate the vast schism between the expectations of the audience and the creative aspirations of the director as dramatically as Toshiya Ueno's *Obscene Internet Group: Make Me Come!!* But then again, *Lesbian Mother-in-Law: Son Exchange*, *Slave Sex: My Plaything* and *Nurse Sisters: Pink Consulting Room*, in which Nikki and Yumeka Sasaki appear onscreen together for the very first time, had met with a similarly blank response.

Salarymen on extended lunch breaks, sheltering from the rain or taking advantage of the air-conditioning during the long hot summer months, or



above: Nikki Sasaki shows off her bedside manner in Osamu Satō's *Nurse Sisters: Pink Consulting Room* (2003), in which she plays alongside her real-life sister Yumeka. ©Shinto
opposite: From the grindhouse to the arthouse: a *chirashi*, featuring a scene from Shinji Imaoka's *Lunch Box* (2004), advertising a season of modern pink films at the Athenée Français Cultural Centre in Tokyo.

just wanting somewhere comfortable to sit alone and while away the hours – these are the pink theatres' primary patrons. During the screenings, dark figures shuffle in and out of the auditorium, seldom seeing an entire film through from beginning to end. Most theatres have incredibly low projection standards, the sound barely audible above the rumbling of passing commuter trains and the lights only marginally dimmed to discourage the less than savoury habits of some of their clientele. It seems that even if they could see them properly, no one is really watching the films, aside from the sporadic diehard fans scribbling notes on every title they see to publish on their own homepages.⁴²¹

Inspired by the media coverage of a number of prominent internet group suicide incidents, Ueno's film is a well-constructed, morbidly witty and oddly affecting piece, making use of the dramatic device of the onscreen text of the characters' chat-room messages to highlight their sense of social dejection. One thing it is not, however, is particularly sexy, and its bleak scenario seems particularly ill-suited to the pink theatre.

Several months later, *Obscene Internet Group* found a more receptive audience when it was voted the best pink film of 2003 by the readers of *PG* magazine, narrowly beating Yutaka Ikejima's *Adulterous Wife's Dirty Afternoon* to the top spot. Screening under the title of *Ambiguous* at the 16th Annual Pink Taishô Awards in April 2004, as part of an all-nighter of the year's top five titles in the plush setting of the newly-

refurbished Shinbungei-za, a legendary repertory theatre in Ikebukuro, Ueno's film drew a younger, more sophisticated crowd, both male and female, who gathered in the hallway to discuss their personal reactions between screenings.

Projected onto a large screen that dominates the spacious and clean auditorium that plays host to a full-house of several hundred viewers attentive almost to the point of reverence, the Shinbungei-za screening has thrown these low-budget works into a completely new light. The event, compèred by a radiant Yumika Hayashi and an effusive Yutaka Ikejima, highlights something very curious about the current state of the pink film. That is, though the target market at their premier point of arrival doesn't really care what is on screen as long as there are a few good-looking young girls baring their breasts, there is a completely distinct audience out there who are clearly passionate about these films, taking them very seriously indeed. Scripted by Kyôko Godai, Ikejima's film, the touching tale of a home-helper entrusted with the care of a terminally ill old man whom, it transpires, twenty years earlier had been the boss of a company where she was working as a secretary, and with whom she had conducted a secret affair, brought tears to many an eye in the audience.

Outside of this annual event, this alternative audience watch the films on cable, on DVD, or increasingly using broadband services rather than in the tatty fleapits where they originally appear. They avidly scan



above: Nikki Sasaki takes out her angst on a corrupt world in Toshiya Ueno's blackly comic *Ambiguous* (2003).
©Kokuei/Shinto

the pages of *PG* magazine and its accompanying website to find out about the latest releases and to read interviews with the actresses and directors. And they gather at the regular 'talk show' all-nighter events that take place all over Tokyo. This is a close-knit and friendly community, in which the barriers between performer, filmmaker and fan break down. But is it enough to keep the pink film in existence much further into the 21st Century as the core audience wanes?

Toshiya Ueno, the director of *Ambiguous* (and most certainly not to be confused with the critic and academic of the same name), is the oldest of the new group of pink filmmakers known as the Seven Lucky Gods, or *shichifukujin*. The six others are Yûji Tajiri, Shinji Imaoka, Yoshitaka Kamata, Toshirô Enomoto, Mitsuru Meike, and Rei Sakamoto. They are all predominantly associated with the production house Kokuei, but just like the *shitennô*, several have also made pictures for other companies. Toshirô Enomoto, for example, has actually made most of his films directly for Shintocho, as well as one title for ENK. Pundits talk of these figures as the next generation after the Four Devils, under whom they all started out in the industry as assistant directors. Though there is much talk of generational divides within the industry (with the likes of Kôji Wakamatsu and Kinya Ogawa marking the first generation, Genji Nakamura and Banmei Takahashi the second, Yôjirô Takita and Shûji Kataoka the third, etc.), it should be pointed out that this new breed – and Ueno, who was born in 1963, in particular – are at most only a few years younger than their immediate forebears.

Ueno's grouping in the second camp is a little confusing because, though he started off as an assistant director on Toshiki Satô's first film, *Dream Woman*, his own debut, *Latest Soap Technique*, was released in 1990, several years before the Four Devils really provided a talking point and five years before any of the others from the Seven Lucky Gods made it to the director's chair. Ueno is a highly competent and often inspired filmmaker in his own right. His four films in the *Lustful Sister-in-Law* series, running between 1998 and 2001, were all written by Toshiki Satô's regular scripter Masahiro Kobayashi, and are considered minor classics of the genre, possessing much of the same mordant black humour as Satô's finest. The first two, also known by the director's titles of *Sky Blue Crayon Vol. 1* and *Vol. 2*, chart the misadventures of a young loser returning from Tokyo back to his rural hometown, where he is forced to resolve a long-term grudge with his older brother left behind in the country. The older sibling's wife, Hotaru Hazuki, and his mistress, local nurse Yumeka Sasaki, add further fuel to the fire in this family feud.

One of Ueno's most accomplished films, *The Dragon God and Shurenge* (1994), was actually written by Takahisa Zeze (under the pseudonym of Kakura). Based loosely on Kenji Nakagami's short story *Aragami* ('Wild

God'), its 'true crime'-style depiction of a man trapped in his own private purgatory contained many elements familiar from Zeze's films, especially *Dream of Garuda* from the same year. The narrative adopted a cyclical and allegorical tack, with key scenes relayed out of sequence as flashbacks, characters disappearing from the story without warning, and oblique references to Buddhist mythology. Takeshi Itô plays Daichi, a murderer-rapist fleeing from justice who is haunted by memories of an incestuous relationship with his younger sister (Hotaru), first seen working in a rudely-furnished workshop making paper lotus flowers. After murdering a middle-aged woman selling apples, he arrives in a remote and snowbound hot-spring town in Nagano, seemingly populated with only half a dozen or so inhabitants. Here, an old man named Katsu (Shirô Shimomoto) mistakenly identifies him as a famous TV actor. Katsu tenaciously latches on to Daichi, taking him to the town's local strip club, a rundown and deserted establishment staffed by a cross-dressing grotesque (played by Kazuhiro Sano) at the door. In the club, an attractive young dancer (Hitomi Aikawa) performs an elaborate striptease against a scarlet backdrop, removing Heian-era robes while clutching paper flowers in her mouth. It appears Daichi has met his destiny.

The Dragon God and Shurenge was the first time a film by Ueno was voted number one in the 1994 *PG* Best Ten awards, with him sharing the prize for Best Director with Toshiki Satô (for *Tandem*). We might look upon Ueno as something of an advance guard for this 'new' New Wave then, and indeed, he has already been graced with at least one retrospective, organised at the Athenée Français in 2004 under the banner *Biographies of New Japanese Artists of Principle Vol. 10*, and playing directly after a selection of twelve films from other contemporary pink directors entitled *A New School of Pink-Movies*.⁴²² However, despite making around a dozen pink films and several erotic video productions, Ueno has ended up somewhat overshadowed by the *shitennô* directors, possibly because, in comparison, he lacks a distinct filmmaking voice of his own, but it is equally possible he was just unlucky in being overlooked at the time when the others were gathering critical notice. Either way, as yet he has made nothing to catch the eyes of more mainstream cinema-goers.

The *shichifukujin* label applied to this new group of directors suggested some form of continuum with the Four Devils. Although it is not entirely clear who first coined it, the name appears to have originated with an early film from Shinji Imaoka, *Demeking* (1998), whose pink theatre release title was *Molester Train: Benten's Butt*: Benten is the name of one of the Seven Gods of Fortune in Japanese mythology, whose origins are similarly drawn from Buddhism. In the film, it is the tattoo of the goddess on a young woman (Yôko Chôsokabe) spied riding on a train that inspires the

hapless Ôguro (Takuji Suzuki) to appoint himself as her protector from the fantastical leviathan Demeking. The film ends with a climactic battle, as Ôguro's low-life associates band together to form the modern-day counterpart to the seven deities who pool their resources to thwart the beast. *Demeking* combined the man-in-the-rubber-suit antics of the *kaijû eiga* monster movie – though on a considerably lower budget than any of *Godzilla's* rampages – with all the saucy train frolics that exemplify the *Molester Train* series, in a comic tale which, at 80 minutes, runs several reels longer than the average *pinku eiga*.

In contrast to the Four Devils, however, it is perhaps not so helpful to talk of the Seven Lucky Gods as a movement as such, but rather as a collection of directors who have been grouped together under one banner to imply some sort of a follow-on. As Roland Domenig phrases it, "they represent a typical 'après'-phenomenon: they are post-*shitenno* and it is very doubtful whether they have the potential to form a movement comparable to that of the *shitenno* a decade ago."⁴²³ Put simply, if the Four Devils had never happened then certainly no one would be talking about the Seven Lucky Gods.

It also seems unlikely that any really have the personality or strength of will to make much of an impact in the wider filmmaking industry outside of *pinku eiga* or V-cinema, in the way that the directors who served their apprenticeships in the late '70s and '80s did – for example Yôjirô Takita, Ryûichi Hiroki or Kazuyuki Izutsu – nor to handle larger productions, as for example Zeze did with *Moon Child*. There have been a few minor cases of these directors straying from their comfort zones so far, but I emphasise, only minor. In 2005, Yûji Tajiri made *Harami*, a kind of J-horror answer to *Rosemary's Baby* starring teen idol Aki Maeda (of *Battle Royale* and *Linda, Linda, Linda* fame) as a pregnant 17-year-old with grave concerns about her unborn child. A more intriguing contribution to Japanese cinema was made by Yoshitaka Kamata who, born in 1964, is the second oldest of the seven after Toshiya Ueno. In 2004, he directed a very moving non-pink feature, *Yumeno*, from a script by Zeze's regular screenwriter Kishû Izuchi. Reminiscent of Aoyama's takes on a jilted generation with films like *Helpless* (1996) and *Eureka* (2000), Kamata's film intertwined the stories of three youngsters with no connection to their roots, their environment or their fellow human beings, who find themselves thrust uneasily together by circumstance and set adrift to fend for themselves in the wide, snowy, expansive landscape of Hokkaido. (Hokkaido, by the way, is the birthplace of not only Kamata, but also Tajiri, and Kokuei company president Keiko Satô.) Kamata's first two *pinku eiga*, *Sara* and *No Woman No Cry* (both released in 1998) were both highly regarded, with the latter – the gritty tale of an ex-con who moves in with the wife of the man he has just murdered – reminiscent

of Zeze's work from the same period, such as *Dirty Maria* or the mainstream feature *Hysteric*; it comes as little surprise therefore to discover that Kamata's film was pseudonymously scripted by Zeze. This attempt by the younger director to make a break from the *pinku eiga* sector he'd established himself within was impressive, however it should also be pointed out that, at least in industry terms, *Yumeno* was not much of a step out on a limb. Kokuei was one of the names among the several companies listed as production partners, and clearly Keiko Satô played a major role in pushing the film into production. At the time *Yumeno* possibly indicated that Kokuei, as a company, seemed willing to explore new markets outside of the *seijin eiga* arena, but it's actually best viewed as a one-off experiment, and though an assured piece of filmmaking, after the soul-searching pessimism of the late '90s had long run its course, it proved too little too late to gain much in the way of significant notice.

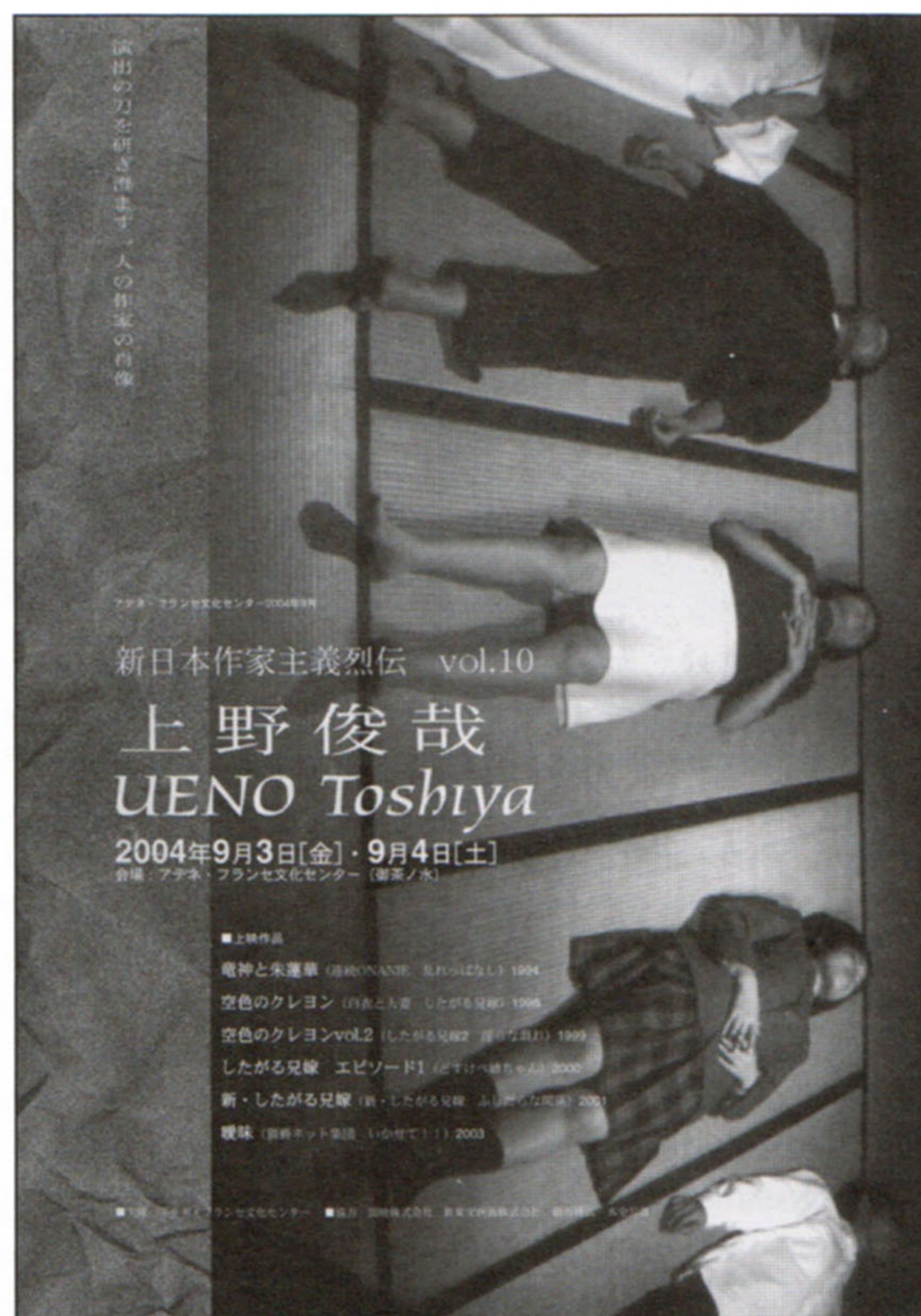
One director who has been more active than any of the others in trying to boost the profile of pink films within mainstream cinema circles in Japan in a way that can be likened to the attempts of the Four Devils in the early '90s, is Mitsuru Meike. He is probably the best-known of the seven to foreign audiences, due to the freak success of *The Glamorous Life of Sachiko Hanai* (2004), whose mixture of irreverent satire, raunchy humour and topicality has made it by far the most widely-seen pink film of its era. Meike was the leading figure behind the high-profile *pinku eiga* promotional event the P-1 Grand-Prix. Using the K-1 Grand Prix Wrestling tournament as its model, the format was that 16 films were screened in double bills over a one-week period and the audience would vote for their favourite to go on to the next round. Ironically, considering that it was at least partially intended to announce the arrival of the new breed of directors, the first tournament, held between 22-28 July, 2000, at the Nakano Musashino Hall in Tokyo, was actually won by the *shitenno* director Toshiki Satô, with his *Apartment Wife: Adulterous Passion*. Though the P-1 Grand Prix was held again in 2001, it was not to become an annual occurrence due to the time and effort spent organising it. However, it went out with a bang, with its final edition held during the pink cinema retrospective at the 2002 Far East Film Festival in Udine, the first time P-1 was ever held outside Japan. This time the competition was not limited to films released within that year, and the prize went to an older title, Yûji Tajiri's wonderful *Rustling in Bed* from 1999.⁴²⁴

Tajiri's film is one we'll be looking at in more detail in a moment, as it almost defines the entire movement, if we concede it is a movement, that is. If there is anything that the new directors share, it is their general rejection of political subject matter and an approach that is considerably less confrontational, cutting edge, or given over to formal experimentation. As Roland Domenig puts it, their films "are characterised by a more

introverted and personal style than the films of the *shitenno*, reflecting the emotional instability and insecurity of today's Japanese youth."⁴²⁵ Unlike their *senpai* whom they assisted in the early part of the '90s, the work of the Seven Lucky Gods has retreated away from wider real-world issues and into the realm of the interpersonal. Relationships, infidelity, fear of commitment, loneliness, unrequited love; these are the typical concerns of the *shichifukujin*'s films, with a marked emphasis on female subjectivity that has been carried over from Toshiki Satô's films. If the pink film can still in any way be considered political, it is only in the sense that the personal is political.

We could say then that, in this respect, the pink film (or at least the more progressive end of it) has followed a similar trajectory to much of Japanese film in general, but especially documentary. The incendiary, polemical works of Kôji Wakamatsu and his coterie have very clear parallels with independent documentaries such as Shinsuke Ogawa's filmmaking collective's cinematic crusade for justice for the farmers whose land was about to be grabbed by the government in order to build Narita airport, in the *Sanritsuka* series of the late '60s/early '70s. In Heisei-era Japan, in which a generation who have known only peace and prosperity are now in the driving seat (the so-called *heiwa boke* generation, a rather deprecating term meaning something to the effect of 'peace-loving stupor'⁴²⁶), the films of the Seven Lucky Gods find their counterpart in the self-absorbed and solipsistic new wave of video diaries; these might be compared to the first-person literary form of the *shi-shosetsu* ('I-Novel') popular in the early part of the 20th Century. Such individualistic 'I-films' (also referred to as 'private films') are less focused on wider social issues than the immediate environment and concerns of the author/filmmaker, expressed in a naturalistic and straightforward manner. While this new strain of personal documentary has its roots in Kazuo Hara's *Extreme Private Eros* (1974), it received new impetus in the early '90s with the appearance of Naomi Kawase's intimate 8mm works – specifically the quest for her absent father in *Embracing* (1992) – and represents a particularly salient trend in the *jishu eiga* scene during the first decade of the 21st Century. Such films may touch on political subjects, but they rarely adopt a political stance.⁴²⁷

Take for example the case of the young filmmaker Tetsuaki Matsue, a third-generation Korean resident in Japan, whose attempts to get to grips with the issue of his own national identity formed the basis of the highly-entertaining *Annyong Kimchee* (1999), his graduation project from the Japan Academy of the Moving Image, made when he was just twenty one. After a brief backtrack through history, detailing the Japanese colonisation of Korea from 1910 to 1945, where Koreans were forced to assume Japanese names and work in Japan, the film adopts the format of an intimate family



above: The group suicide scene from *Ambiguous* graces this *chirashi* advertising the Athenée Français's Toshiya Ueno retrospective from 2004.

portrait as the assorted clan of parents, aunts, uncles and grandmother are interviewed about Tetsuaki's now deceased grandfather Yukichi Matsue (born Chon-Sik Yu), the first family member to come over to Japan. It is clear from this personal history that times have changed a great deal in the decades following Yukichi's arrival not speaking a word of the language. As he strove to completely assimilate into Japanese society, amazingly he soon managed to successfully pass himself off as more Japanese than most ethnic Japanese, and became a valuable pillar of the local community. Yet to his dying day, like all *zainichi*, he was forced to carry the alien registration card.

Mark Nornes's assessment of Matsue's filmmaking approach is worth quoting at length, as it hits the nail on the head for a generation of directors working in all sectors of the industry: "While talking to Matsue that first night, I pushed him to express what he thought he was doing in this documentary. He provoked the line of questioning by asserting that his film had no *poli* (policy) because he was third generation. What he really meant is that he did not perceive his films as political and reveals a second layer of generational difference: that of today's youth versus the Ogawa Pro generation. Like most people his age, Matsue wants to avoid politics at all costs, which is certainly one factor

driving him and other documentarists inward to the self, family and friends. Kazuo Hara, who was at Yamagata for another event, told me it is like an allergic reaction. By all measures, Matsue's film is profoundly political. It ranges across subjects, such as generation gaps, North versus South Korea, World War II, slave labour, racial discrimination, imperialism, national and racial identity, immigration, and exile. That he cannot acknowledge the politicization of his own doing points to the biggest problem with the private film's manifestation in Japan."⁴²⁸

As a filmmaker, Matsue presents an interesting case with some relevance to the discussion on pink films, as his later works present a fascinating conjunction between sex, politics and representation. Firstly, it is worth remembering that the issues of nationality and identity noted by Nornes above were already being tackled far more polemically within the pink genre by the likes of Kazuhiro Sano and Takahisa Zeze, a decade before. It is also interesting that Matsue has stated that his twin interests are documentary and hardcore pornography, areas in which he has been most active after subsequently finding employment in the AV industry.⁴²⁹ The similarities between the two genres – the recording of real, non-simulated action with the rawness of the production a testament to its *vérité* nature – are obvious. Matsue himself has stated that, "It was Company Matsuo, and not Kazuo Hara (director of *The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On* (1987), one of Japan's most famous documentaries) who triggered my interest in documentaries. He's a pornographic film director, who also makes documentaries and music videos. In his porn films, he usually uses *hame-dori* – where the director films himself and a woman having sex. However, what he really wants to shoot is the prelude to and aftermath of sex, and the woman's motivation for appearing in a porn movie. His main question is 'Why porno?'"⁴³⁰

"Why porno?" indeed. Despite his promising debut with *Annyong Kimchee*, Matsue's subsequent films, both in and out of the AV market, have revealed a conception of documentary as merely a record of events, or of footage of people talking or revealing themselves directly to the camera. While he has played with the conventions of both genres on several occasions, the results are more interesting in theory than they are in practice. *Every Japanese Woman Makes Her Own Curry* (2003) billed itself as '3 nights and 4 days with curry and women in Tokyo', and was prompted when construction work next door forced the director to leave his apartment for a couple of days, and in need of somewhere to stay. He hit upon the ingenious idea of phoning several young female acquaintances and inviting himself round to film them cook dinner for him. The one proviso is that each cooks curry and rice, which, since it was the only dish that his first girlfriend could muster, is Matsue's favourite dish. In a nod to the

documentary-inspired peculiarity of the Japanese Adult Video, in which the sex sequences are often preceded by lengthy to-camera interviews, Matsue's subjects are introduced then sent to the kitchen to 'perform', while responding to his banal off-camera chatter. After his appetite is assuaged, the two wind down with a few minutes of after-meal banter (*pilau* talk?) as they digest their meal. Matsue's later *Identity* (2004) was produced by Company Matsuo within the AV market, and was speciously structured as a documentary focusing on *zainichi* performers within this closed-off industry – potentially a politically charged topic, although it is not long before his subjects' life histories take a back seat to their main function within the film, which is to perform in a series of explicit hardcore sequences.

Matsue is more relevant to our discussion of the pink industry than one might assume, despite all his work as a filmmaker being produced outside it. Not only was Eri, one of the girls in *Every Japanese Woman Makes Her Own Curry* also one of the cast members in Zeze's *Tokyo X Erotica*, Matsue has also made appearances in several pink films himself: as Nikki Sasaki's beef-bowl restaurant co-worker confidante in Toshiki Satô's *The Lost Virgin*; and as the eager-to-please home tutee in Meike's *The Glamorous Life of Sachiko Hanai*.

One of the most vocal critics of the new generation of pink directors at Kokuei has been Takahisa Zeze, who on many occasions has publicly described them and their films with words like 'yowai' or 'karui', meaning 'weak' or 'light'. Echoing Nornes's comments about modern documentary, Zeze has stated that, "they don't have this sense of struggle. They make films that relate to themselves and to a very tiny world that surrounds them. They don't try to present a new vision of society or ask questions relating to broad topics, but work on a more personal level."⁴³¹

This is not to say that their films are necessarily any the less interesting or relevant for this shift in focus. As well as reflecting the era in which they are working, the individual directors should be commended for their attempts at redressing long-established imbalances in gender politics. Their films are not only about boys looking at girls. Often adopting a woman's point of view, they attempt to flesh out the female characters from the standard two-dimensional fancies, and portray them with their own yearnings, hopes and desires. In these new films, eroticism comes, not from breaking down a woman's physical defences – as in the extremes of the '80s – but from entering her emotional sphere.

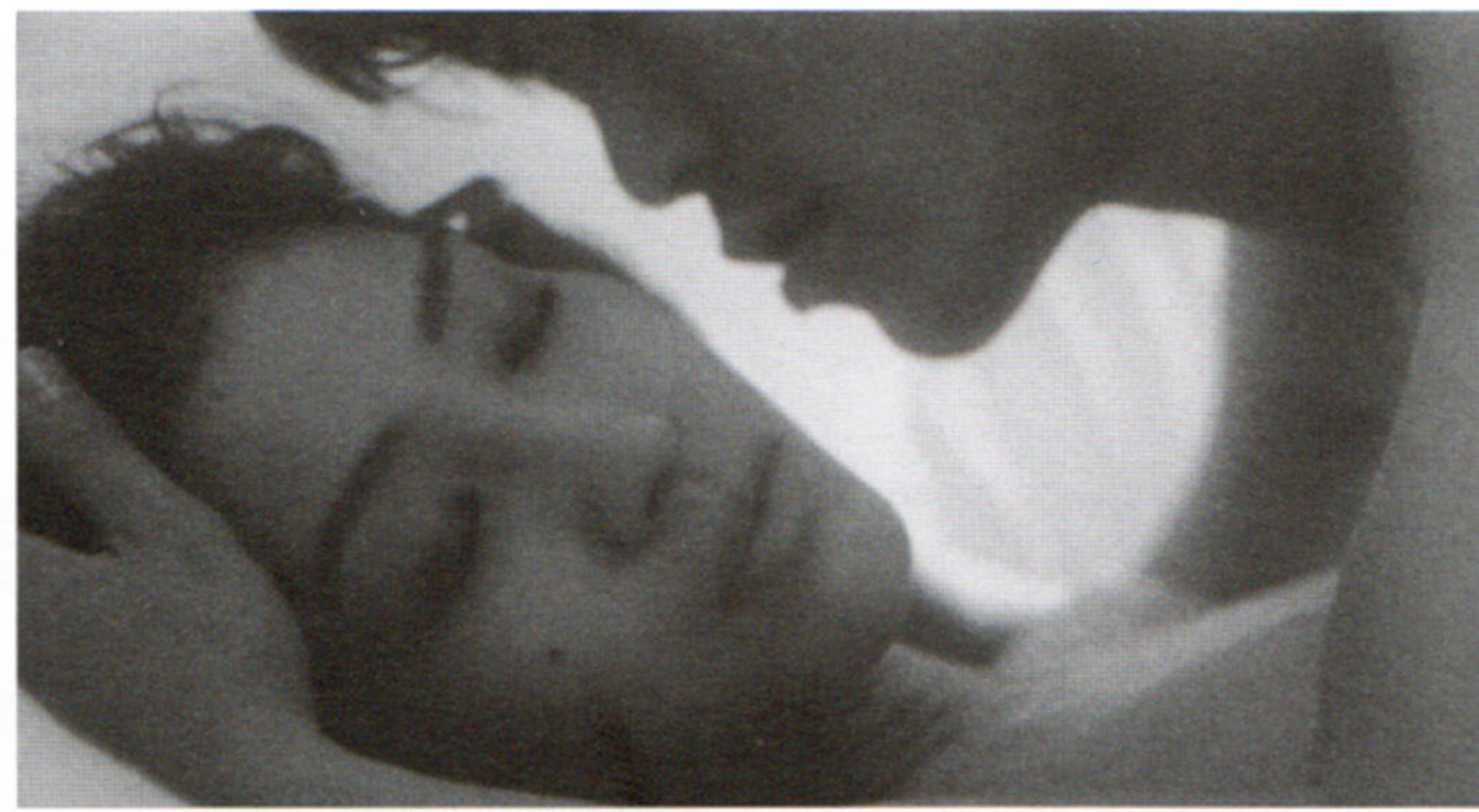
During the Pink Taishô awards ceremony organised by *PG* magazine and held in May 2000, there was a heated onstage spat between Zeze and Yûji Tajiri, whose *Rustling in Bed* had beaten the older director's *Anarchy in Japansuke* to the top spot for best film of 1999. This incident was actually a little contrived to provoke debate and to promote the upcoming P-1 Grand Prix, rather than anything genuine, and in fact it

should be stressed that behind the scenes there is no animosity whatsoever between the *shitenno* and *shichifukujin* directors. After all, as previously mentioned, the latter group all started out as assistant directors to the former, and all the directors concerned are closely linked by their shared background working at Kokuei, and for many at Kan Mukai's Shishi Pro prior to that. Both Tajiri and the younger Rei Sakamoto have explicitly cited Zeze's films as providing the impetus for them to enter the pink industry.⁴³²

Tajiri's pathway into the pink film industry is typical of that taken by the other *shichifukujin* directors, so it is worth considering in some depth. Born 1968 in a small town of some 20,000 souls in Hokkaido, Tajiri turned to the movies for escapism from a young age, writing his own scenarios from his mid-teens onwards. In his first year at high school, he made his own 8mm *jishu eiga*. "There weren't really many opportunities to have fun, so movie theatres provided the main source of entertainment," he was to later say of his youth. Like many a Japanese teenager, he enjoyed the rite of passage of attempting to sneak into adult movie theatres, which is where he encountered one film that made a particularly strong impact – *Crazed Fruit*, the Roman Porno remake by Kichitarô Negishi of the Kô Nakahira movie that starred Yujirô Ishihara.

His love of movies inevitably led him to Tokyo, where he enrolled at Teikyo University. Here, he kept up his old viewing habits, especially in Nikkatsu's theatres, while embarking on his own small projects and entertaining ambitions of becoming part of the thriving *jishu eiga* scene of the late '80s. "There were obviously many more theatres there, so I went quite often to watch films, especially Roman Porno ones, which were shown in triple features. The third film was usually not a Nikkatsu film, but an independent one. One day I saw *Lolita Vibrator Torture* by Hisayasu Satô, and was fascinated by this film, which was completely different from anything I had ever seen before." By the time he had graduated, Nikkatsu had stopped making Roman Porno and changed to Ropponica, cutting off this particular route into a filmmaking apprenticeship. Then he discovered the films of Takahisa Zeze and, at an event at the Kameari-za theatre in Aoto in Tokyo (from the early '80s one of the most important venues for pink and Roman Porno films, as well as the venue where, up until its closure in 1999, the annual Pink Taishô awards used to be held) he saw a leaflet from Shishi Pro advertising for assistant directors. After doing a bit of research, he discovered that this is where both Zeze and Hisayasu Satô were making their films, and duly entered the company in 1990. He started off as an assistant director to these two filmmakers as well as others, like Akira Fukamachi, who were making films there, before making his own debut in 1997 with *Go Go Train*.⁴³³

It was *Rustling in Bed*, however, that best signposted the change in direction for Kokuei. Arriving just before



the turn of the millennium, Tajiri's second work (also known by the English language title of *No Love Juice*, although the original release title translates as *OL Love Juice*) is a subtly-realised and well-drawn character study, more focused on relationships than sex. Although it contains all the steamy bedroom moments one might expect from a film hailing from this production sector (albeit more artistically shot than most), the film delivers far more than mere bare skin, and as such perhaps makes for one of the best entry points into the pink film, a view backed up by its victory at the 2002 P-1 Grand Prix at Udine, as voted for by the viewers of the festival who were mostly encountering this peculiarly Japanese genre for the very first time.

The subject of the film is 28-year-old Tomomi, played by Atsumi Kubota in what is apparently her only acting role. As the film opens, her plight appears similar to that of many a young Tokyo office girl approaching her 30s, stuck in a dull and uninspiring job and in a dead-end relationship that has dragged on for six years and which, as she herself acknowledges, is boring and going nowhere. Though she has very little sense of control in her life, she doesn't seem particularly distraught when her long-term boyfriend Nishizawa dumps her out of blue for another woman. After a night out drinking she awakens on the late-night commuter train that is taking her back to her apartment in the suburbs to find a good-looking younger man (Mikio Satô) dozing with his head on her shoulder. Finding the warmth of his body slumped against her a source of



above and top: *Pinku eiga* for a new generation: Atsumi Kubota and Mikio Satô in *No Love Juice: Rustling in Bed* (1999). ©Kokuei/Shinto

comfort in her hazy, half-awake state, she hesitates a while, then daringly plants a kiss on his lips before dashing from the carriage, only to find she has missed her stop and is stranded in a strange neighbourhood after the trains have stopped running. Turning around, she notices that the handsome stranger has woken up and followed her. He suggests taking a taxi back to the previous station together. The cab ride marks the beginning of an intense yet ultimately doomed love affair with the younger man, named Takao, a 20-year-old arts student majoring in photography.

Without a decent knowledge of the attitudes, tropes and clichés engrained within the previous forty years of the genre, it is difficult to appreciate just how revolutionary *Rustling in Bed* actually is. Firstly, the adoption of Tomomi's perspective prevents this from being a vicarious portrait of a younger man's fantasies of a more experienced older woman showing him the ropes in the bedroom. The female first-person narrative voice, in itself, is nothing new in a sex film – one only has to consider early Western titles such as *Deep Throat* or *Emmanuelle* for example. What is novel in the context of *pinku eiga*, however, is that the woman's actions within the film aren't subservient to that of the fantasies of the imagined (male) viewer, and thus her motives remain entirely credible. Sex is not Tomomi's ultimate goal (we're never entirely sure if it is Takao's either). A meaningful relationship in the sense of stability and companionship might be, however.

The age gap is an issue, but seemingly more for her than for him. At least, this is the case initially, as becomes apparent from her frequent *tête-à-têtes* with her best friend, played by Yumika Hayashi. The balance of power soon shifts though. While she initially feels slightly ill-at-ease as the besotted younger man attempts to capture her image by taking photos of her, as her confidence grows, it is Tomomi who is soon leading the way in the bedroom scenes. Some of these play as groundbreaking reversals of standard pink setups, as the camera tightly fixes on Takao's face rather than hers as she pleasures him. In this respect, Mikio Satô seems well cast as Takao, possessing a conspicuous androgynous prettiness, compared with other pink actors, that is perfectly put to service by Tajiri. Evasive and impossible to pin down, it is he who remains the mysterious cypher at the heart of the film, to the viewer, and to Tomomi, with whom we are intended to identify.

So is a film like *Rustling in Bed* a convincing depiction of the lives and loves of the modern-day Japanese woman, or is this a case of male filmmakers ascribing certain feelings, desires and emotional states to women? Though a lot of these films do seem to resonate with female viewers, one can also argue that for all the superficial change, pink films still very much pander to male fantasy. The majority of directors, and of course viewers, are still men, and at the end of the day, portraying women at their most emotionally naked is

not a million miles away from showing them physically naked. These are still, very much, idealised constructs created for the pleasure of men.

However, one should also not downplay the fact that in this new wave of films actresses such as Hotaru Hazuki, Yumeka and Nikki Sasaki, and Yumika Hayashi are given a lot more chance to actually 'act' than both their AV idol counterparts and the *pinku* starlets of previous years, to create convincing and more fully-rounded onscreen characters that are just as captivating with their clothes on as with them off. Though her background is in AV, Hayashi, for example, has given some startling performances – notably in Shinji Imaoka's *Lunch Box* (2004) and Mitsuru Meike's *Bitter Sweet* (2004). Tajiri's later *Convulsions* (2004) features a particularly nice turn from Yumeka Sasaki, which won her the joint prize for best actress (with Yumika Hayashi for *Lunch Box*) at the 17th Pink Taishô awards. The film sees her in her usual tough-girl-next-door persona as a hot-headed magazine photographer named Minori, involved in an adulterous affair with her editor, Kushida. Though it would initially seem she is fully in control of her life and her feelings, her brash attitude throws a work assignment into jeopardy when she clashes with her subject, Ageha, a prominent woman writer of erotic manga. It is Shinichi, the journalist who accompanied her on the assignment, who takes the brunt of anger from Kushida when the article is judged a failure. But Minori soon finds she is not on such stable ground as she initially thought, when she becomes suspicious that the relationship between Kushida and Ageha might be a little more involved than it appears and, after taking one step too far by sleeping with Shinichi, she is forced to confront a few home truths about herself.

One should also not forget the behind-the-scenes input of women writers like Naoko Nishida, who wrote the scripts of some of the more emblematic titles of the new millennium, like Yûji Tajiri's fifth and sixth pink films, *OL Sisters* (2001) and *Dizzy* (2002), and Mitsuru Meike's *It Don't Mean a Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing* (2002), *Bitter Sweet* (2004), and *Secondhand Love* (2000), that latter of which I covered in passing in a previous chapter.⁴³⁴



above and opposite top: Yumeka Sasaki as the feisty photo-journalist of Yûji Tajiri's *Convulsions* (2004). ©Kokuei/Shinto



This shared use of Nishida as scriptwriter in what we might describe as the second stage of both Tajiri and Meike's respective careers, points to a certain affinity between the two directors that goes beyond the choice of subject matter. The similarly-aged Meike, born Kanagawa Prefecture in 1969, is credited as one of the scriptwriters on Tajiri's debut, *Go Go Train*, while even further behind the scenes, the two directors have often assisted on the set of each others' films in an uncredited capacity.

With Meike's Best Director prize at the Pink Taishô awards in 2002, for *Shameful Family*, coming only a couple of years after a similar recognition for Tajiri in 1999, for *Rustling in Bed*, one can say that their careers since they started making films at Kokuei have run on parallel tracks. The main difference is that Meike did not hail from Shishi Pro, but began in the industry as an assistant director to Sachi Hamano, later working with Toshiya Ueno (on *The Dragon God and Shurenge*) and Toshiki Satô at their smaller Outcast Produce company. Following the 1996 straight-to-video title *Confinement* (produced by the company Museum, who also bankrolled Hisayasu Satô's four non-pink titles,

including *Naked Blood*, the same year), Meike made his *pinku eiga* debut with *Nurse's Diary: Twice and Three Times While Still Wet* (1997) for Shintocho. The film benefited from a script by Toshiki Satô's collaborator, Masahiro Kobayashi (Meike AD-ed on Kobayashi's first two non-pink indie films, *Closing Time*, from 1997, and *Bootleg Film*, from 1999), and was voted 7th best of the year in *PG's Best Ten* for 1997.

Always pushing his work in new directions while attempting miracles on the usual limited budgets, Meike has proved to be one of the most ambitious and eager to experiment out of the *shichifukujin*. Think, for example, of the inventive *mise en scène* of *Snow / Woman* (2000), a film consisting of the erotic fantasies of a man (Yôta Kawase) sealed off alone in a cabin by a howling blizzard in the midst of an atmospheric wintry dreamscape, as he staves off hyperthermia while waiting for the older married woman with whom he is having an affair to show up. Or the experimental 8mm montage that caps *Bitter Sweet*, a poignant tale of a woman with doubts about her upcoming marriage, who becomes involved with an older, world-weary restaurateur who is contemplating leaving his wife and two children.



Another, earlier, film of Meike's fits more comfortably into the terrain of affable relationship dramas that typifies the post-*shitenno* era. (*STOP USING SEX AS A WEAPON* + (*JUST LIKE*) *STARTING OVER* from 1998 was, like *Snow / Woman*, written by Meike himself, and is one of the very best films from the Seven Lucky Gods. Here, the familiar pairing of Yumeka Sasaki and Yôta Kawase are joined by Yôji Tanaka, better known under the nickname of BoBA. (In passing, Tanaka appeared in several titles for Kokuei as well as a number of ENK's gay films, including Hisayasu Satô's *The Fetist* and *Hunter's Sense of Touch* during the '90s. His characteristic features have subsequently landed him a host of parts in countless larger domestic titles, including *The Grudge* (2003) and *Godzilla Final Wars* (2004), as well as foreign productions like Pen-Ek Ratanaruang's *Last Life in the Universe* (2003) and Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill Vol. 1* (2003), in both instances playing a yakuza.) Meike's modern-day Cinderella story begins when a fire in a love hotel brings an abrupt end to a drunken one-night stand between two strangers. While Sasaki's swooning beautician is rescued by Tanaka's fireman, Kawase wanders off, in a daze, into the darkness and by the next morning has completely forgotten his encounter from the night before, just as his casual fling herself no longer remembers what his face looks like. This has certain advantages for the fireman, who subsequently finds himself smitten by the damsel in distress he rescued from the blaze. Using the other man's cell phone he picked up from the burning hotel room, he gets in contact with him and attempts to spark up a friendship in an attempt to worm his way into the beauty worker's affections, resulting in a potentially hazardous love triangle.

It is *The Glamorous Life of Sachiko Hanai* that Meike looks set to be best remembered for. The film follows the adventures of a sensual but gormless call-girl (played by Emi Kuroda, an AV performer with no previous film experience) transformed into a mental giant after she inadvertently wanders into a coffee shop where a shady negotiation between a North Korean and a Middle Eastern-looking fellow is taking place, and ends up with a bullet embedded in her basal ganglia. Somewhat ironically, given her original ditzy manner, Sachiko's speciality at the *imekura* club (sexual role-play, from 'image club') where she plies her trade is playing the busty private home tutor role (a frequent presence in the pink film recently, with titles like Kinya Ogawa's *Beautiful Home Tutor: Well-Rounded Chasm*, Sakae Nitta's *Punishing Home Tutor: Pantyless One-to-One Lessons*, Yumi Yoshiyuki's *Aspiring Home Tutor: Soiled Pure Whiteness*). However, with her metaphorical 'third eye' opened by the stray slug (represented by the bloody aperture in her forehead), she finds herself blessed with a new capacity for abstract thinking and precognition. She is also

above: Midlife emotional crises in Meike's *Bitter Sweet* (2004), with Yumika Hayashi, Kin Ishikawa and Konatsu. ©Kokuei/Shinto

suddenly able to solve complex mathematical formulae and starts absorbing the collective wisdom of the world like a sponge. These talents make her perfect for the real thing, a job she duly lands when her new-found hunger for knowledge brings her into contact with Professor Saeki (Yukijirô Hotaru). Impressed by her ability to discourse on Kant and Chomsky – not to mention her more evident physical attributes – he welcomes her into the bosom of his family under the pretext of tutoring his geeky teenage son, Mamoru (Tetsuaki Matsue). Unfortunately for them all, sometime during her ascent to supra-genius, Sachiko managed to acquire a metal cylinder containing a rubbery digit modelled from the finger of President George Bush. The fingerprint is the only one capable of unleashing America's devastating nuclear stockpile, and the North Koreans are desperate for it.

Best known in its 90-minute 'director's cut' form, even in its original pink theatre version, as *Horny Home Tutor: Teacher's Love Juice*, *The Glamorous Life of Sachiko Hanai* is far from a typical example of the genre. We could well describe it as the *Apocalypse Now* of the pink film. Its troubled production history takes up a large part of the *Pink Ribbon* documentary, with Meike beginning to lose his grip during the staging of the climactic finale in the cave being used as the North Koreans' lair, as the project spirals way over budget, way over schedule and generally out of control. As the film stock begins to run out prematurely, the chances of Meike getting his *magnum opus* finished and ready for release to pink theatres the following week look increasingly slim. In the end, it was not finished in time and, at the eleventh hour, Shintoho called in the hyper-efficient Yutaka Ikejima to turn in a replacement film in a matter of days in order to fill the release schedule gap in the theatres. *Snow / Woman* had met with similar production difficulties, and also went over budget and way over schedule. It should be emphasised that, in both cases, the delay was only tolerated because of the intervention of the producer Keiko Satô. If it weren't for the benevolent attitude of Kokuei's *o-nêsan* towards the directors under her wing, Meike probably would never have worked again in the business.

Although the end product doesn't suffer unduly from its chaotic genesis, the finished film made little immediate impression when it eventually made it into pink theatres on 14 October, 2003 as *Horny Home Tutor: Teacher's Love Juice*. However, in contrast to the brief run through the *seijin eiga* network enjoyed by most such titles, the ensuing global reach enjoyed by Meike's film can only be described as exceptional. Kokuei were initially slow to realise the film's international potential, worried that its blunt satire would offend foreign audiences. However, after the extended 90-minute director's cut premiered at the Athénée Française on 27 August, 2004, as part of the New School of Pink Movies event, its first international screening at the Nippon



above: Emi Kuroda acting out Yôta Kawase's private fantasies in Mitsuru Meike's *The Glamorous Life of Sachiko Hanai* (2004). ©Kokuei/Shintoho

Connection festival in Frankfurt on 15 April, 2005 caused quite a stir, and the film was picked up for DVD distribution in Germany. Its reputation then slowly gathered steam and the longer version went on to be invited to 20 festivals in 14 different countries, including Raindance in London, the Real Fanta Festival in South Korea, the Udine Far East Film Festival, Fantasia in Montreal, and American film festivals including Chicago, Hawaii, and Austin's Fantastic Fest. In November 2005, it received a more prominent release in Tokyo's Theater Pole-Pole in Nakano, while early in



above: Extremities: Meike's experimental *Snow/Woman* (2000). ©Kokuei/Shintoho



above: Emi Kuroda as Sachiko Hanai, the title character of Mitsuru Meike's slapstick political satire. ©Kokuei/Shintocho

2007, it screened on the European TV channel ARTE.⁴³⁵ The best was yet to come, however, as on 13 April, 2007 the film was released theatrically in New York's Cinema Village by Palm Pictures, with reviews, if not gushingly enthusiastic, at least indulgent of its nonsense. Manohla Dargis in *The New York Times* described a "clutter of soft-core political parody, hard-core narrative nonsense, breezy sexism, junky visuals and penny-ante surrealism... Although our plucky star spends much of her onscreen time undressed (not so her male partners), the film differs from pornography in one crucial respect: It doesn't seem to have been created for the usual instrumental purpose."⁴³⁶ *Time Out New York* wrote: "*Glamorous Life* explores, among other things, the previously untapped erotic potential of the writings of Noam Chomsky. But, as befits the form, enjoyment of this film will depend almost entirely on one's appreciation of the substantial anatomical charms of its lead actress,"⁴³⁷ while after a descriptive rundown of the film's story, Aaron Hillis at the *Village Voice* seemed to find any further critical comment superfluous.⁴³⁸

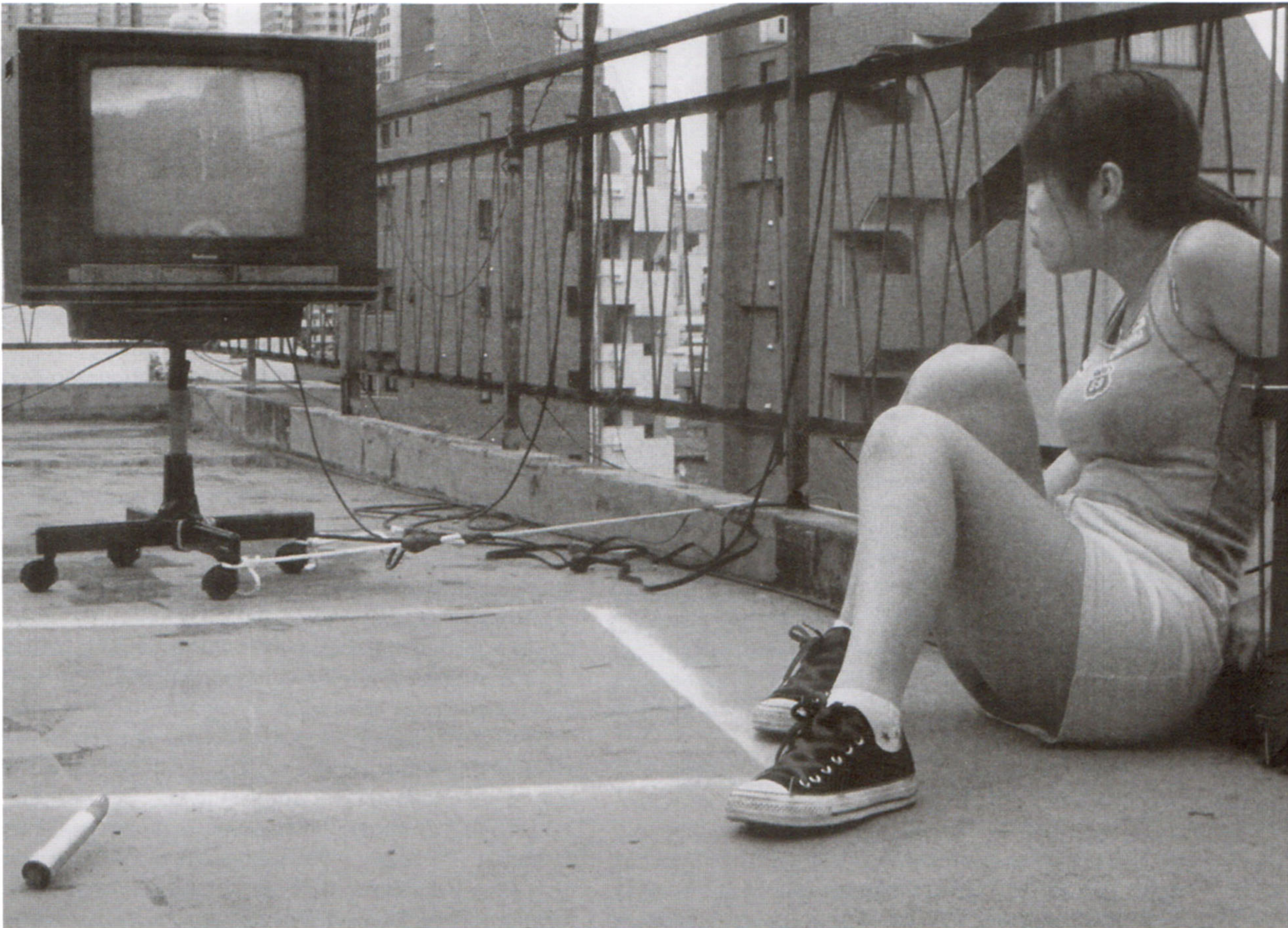


above: Sachiko stumbles upon a secret weapon in *The Glamorous Life of Sachiko Hanai* (2004). ©Kokuei/Shintocho

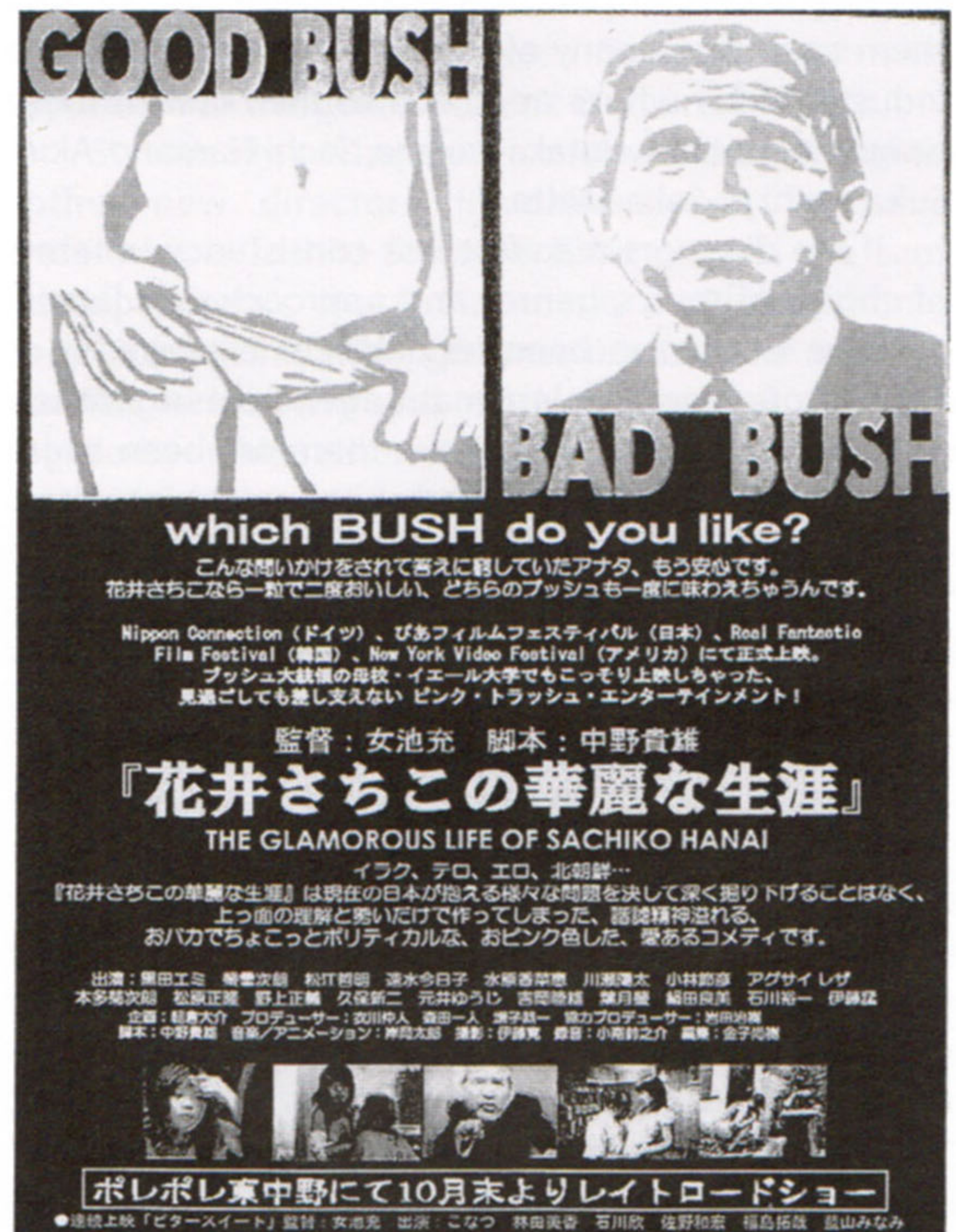
Part of the film's charm hinges on its arsenal of low-tech special effects employed by Meike and crew: the crude animation that accompanies Sachiko's attempt to dislodge the bullet from her brain with an eye-liner pencil; the phallic facsimile of President Bush's finger unashamedly dangled on wires as it attempts to invade her private parts; the GI Joe toys that flee in panic at the three-minute warning; and perhaps one of the most bathetic images of Armageddon ever committed to film. But the key to the film's remarkably long legs clearly hinges on the timeliness of its arrival in the wake of the hugely unpopular Iraq War, and its hilarious portrayal of the most ridiculous president in American history.

The Glamorous Life of Sachiko Hanai bears little resemblance to Meike's generally more straight-faced previous projects. It is, in fact, closer in tone to the usual antics of its scripter. If Takao Nakano's name hasn't been given its due mention within these pages so far, it is only due to the fact that he is not really a bona-fide part of the pink filmmaking scene. His credits in this world include piecing together the *That's Hentai-tainment* compilation of best pink scenes along with Toshiki Satô and Toshiya Ueno in 1991, contributing two not particularly popular titles for Shintocho – *Spiral Zone* (1992) and *Playgirl 7: Most Extreme Bawdy Games* (2002) – and appearing in a number of titles, both straight and gay, mainly those of Yumi Yoshiyuki. Nakano is something of a heavyweight on the Tokyo sleaze scene however, due to the elaborate live girl-on-girl wrestling bouts he organises, and his numerous cut-price straight-to-video oddities produced by Total Media Corporation. Many of these are pastiches of whatever is popular at the Japanese box office at the time, and feature deliberately shoddy production values, ridiculous costumes and an overwhelming sense of kitsch. Cat-fighting is often a main part of the attraction. Who could resist, for example: *Pink Shadow* (2002), modelled on Hiroyuki Nakano's post-modern ninja flick *Red Shadow* (2001); the two films featuring *Sawariman Kintaro* (2002), based on the popular manga character perhaps best known outside of Japan through Takashi Miike's 1999 movie adaptation, though with the name subtly misspelt to give a meaning something akin to "touchy feely man"; and *Hand-to-Hand Battle Royale* (2001). Others of Nakano's video-shot titles better known abroad include: the tits'n'tentacles hardcore sex-horror-comedy *Exorsister* (1994); *Shogun's Secret Harem* (1998), which whisked Yumi Yoshiyuki, Hotaru Hazuki and Yumika Hayashi back to the Edo period and stripped them down to their sumo *fundoshi*; the self-explanatory *Sumo Vixens* (1996), starring the *Weather Woman* herself, Kei Mizutani; and a low-budget soft-porn revision of David Cronenberg's *Shivers*, entitled *Sexual Parasite: Killer Pussy* (2004).

Nakano's hand in the onscreen mayhem of *The Glamorous Life of Sachiko Hanai* perhaps provides a



good reason why the Seven Lucky Gods don't warrant the same amount of individual attention as the Four Devils; the auteurial identities of each of them are less rigidly defined. Whereas the works of Hisayasu Satô, Takahisa Zeze *et al* were readily identifiable as belonging to that particular director, the new breed have less in the way of a signature style, and it is therefore not so immediately easy to distinguish the work of one from another. This is largely because they are far less prolific. In the early years of the new millennium, the output of the pink industry as a whole had shrunk back even further than during the previous decade, and with Kokuei producing only five or six titles a year, most of the Seven Lucky Gods count the numbers of individual titles in their filmographies in single figures. To pluck two extreme examples from either group, while Hisayasu Satô has made around 60 pink films, Rei Sakamoto boasts only four to his name and, like his associates, continues to work as an assistant on the films of his fellow Kokuei directors. In general it is important to note that none of these new directors can count on directing *pinku eiga* as a means of earning a living, and it is certainly not a way to get rich, as it once might have been during the '60s. They make their films for the love of making films, and when



top: President Bush manifests himself to Sachiko in *The Glamorous Life of Sachiko Hanai* (2004). ©Kokuei/Shintoho

above: *Chirashi* for the non-pink theatrical release of the same film. ©Kokuei/Shintoho



above: Toshirô Enomoto's *Withered Flowers* (2000), made directly for Shintohe and released to pink theatres as *Comforting Angel: White Robed Mascot*. ©Shintohe

they are not doing so, earn their livings by other means, either anonymously directing corporate or 'How to' instructional films, karaoke videos, Adult Videos, or working in non-film related employment. This also sets them apart from many of the directors working in the industry today whose approach to their craft is more pragmatic, such as Yutaka Ikejima, Sachi Hamano, Akira Fukamachi or Sakae Nitta.

If the directors manifest less consistency in terms of choice of topics, genres and approach, it is largely because they have been less able to experiment or work through personal thematic agendas as rigorously as Zeze's generation. They have therefore been eager to try out new things and work with new scriptwriters from film to film. They don't want to be pigeon-holed as making one sort of film, and one sort of film only. Mitsuru Meike's follow up to the overblown slapstick satire of *The Glamorous Life of Sachiko Hanai* (2004) with the altogether more mature *Bitter Sweet* (2004) provides a perfect example of this, but there are others, too, as is shown by the relatively small oeuvre of Rei Sakamoto who, born in 1973, is the youngest of the seven.

Sakamoto is a graduate of the Nikkatsu Visual Arts Academy, and first became aware of the possibilities within *pinku eiga* after seeing Zeze's films at the first Biographies of New Japanese Artists of Principle screenings at the Athenée Français. Sakamoto has always stayed close under Zeze's wing, initially starting

out at Kokuei as his assistant director, and clearly influenced by his mentorship. Both Zeze and Imaoka's names are credited on the script of Sakamoto's 1999 debut, *3 Balls, 1 Strike*,⁴³⁹ while Zeze's scriptwriting associate Kishû Izuchi wrote the script for his next film, *21st Century Girl* (2001).

The story of *3 Balls, 1 Strike* is set in motion by the mysterious arrival into the lives of *furita* worker Daisuke and his design school student girlfriend Mika, of Tsutomu, a blast from Daisuke's distant elementary school past whom he barely remembers. Before Tsutomu manages to do too much damage to an already fragile domestic set up, he vanishes into thin air, leaving only a baseball and his cell phone, which he subsequently calls to lead them on a wild goose chase across Saitama so they can return it to him. The ensuing quest draws Daisuke back to his childhood in the countryside and a baseball-loving past, as en route they meet up with another former schoolmate who was once the toast of the town when he briefly made it into the professional league, and discover from Tsutomu's parents that, rather uncannily, the friend who brought them all together had died in a road accident some years previously. A curious road movie/ghost story mishmash that later veers into *Field of Dreams* territory, while a little meandering in its approach, Sakamoto's debut, it has to be said, possesses a youthful energy that ultimately proves infectious. This scattershot approach to genre is also shared by Sakamoto's third film, *Harbour Town Married Woman: While You Were Out Fishing...* (2003), a rather less satisfactory tale of three bumbling friends who take a trip down to the coast, where they become embroiled with a Russian prostitute called Veronica and an old man's quest to catch a whale.

Although entertaining enough, it is difficult to see what Sakamoto is really trying to say with these two films. His second work, *21st Century Girl*, however, is a far more interesting endeavour. Staged around the streets of Tokyo's trendy teen hangout of Shibuya, it offers a snapshot of *fin-de-siècle* miserabilism of the kind that, even if it wasn't gripping the nation's youth at the time, was certainly gripping the nation's filmmakers. Its most memorable scene, of a dozen schoolgirls all linking hands and readying themselves to leap from a high-rise rooftop, was echoed the following year in the more extravagant opening of Shion Sono's 2002 cult horror *Suicide Club*, in which 54 girls in school uniform simultaneously leap beneath an oncoming train at Shinjuku Station.⁴⁴⁰

The film follows the aimless wanderings of down-mouthed high-school girl Chihiro (Rina Sasahara) as she finds herself, cell phone in hand, alone and roaming the streets in search of, if not love, at least consolation. A classmate, Maiko, had unexpectedly pitched herself from the top of a tall building in the film's opening moments, texting her suicide note to

her friends before leaping, while another of her best friends is vying for the attentions of her own love interest. Following a trail of texts, Chihiro stumbles into the arms of Makoto (Kawase), a scruffier older guy who might help her come to terms with her friend's senseless death, especially in the aftermath of his own girlfriend also killing herself.

21st Century Girl conjures up a particularly sullen, haunting atmosphere around its everyday street scenes, and features some very well-shot, almost experimental scenes. Particularly effective is the montage shot live during the countdown to the new millennium, although the film was released over a year after this historical marker point. As a glimpse of a particular dark and uncertain moment in Japanese culture, Sakamoto's film makes for an interesting time capsule, and yet as a piece of erotica, it is so bereft of any titillatory aspects one wonders how it ever managed to make it into any adult theatres.

A director with a more straightforward approach to the genre is Toshirô Enomoto (born 1965), another alumnus from Shishi Pro, which he joined in 1993. While his films lack the clear auteurial identity and higher sense of purpose of those of, say, Tajiri, Meike or Shinji Imaoka (to whom we are just about to come), they do fulfil their obligations as sex films. Above and beyond this call of duty, his best also work as tightly realised pieces of entertainment that could succeed perfectly well without their more lascivious moments. If you are looking for thematic consistency however, Enomoto's work is all over the place, even though, from his 1996 debut with *Slow Motion* onwards, much of it was written by Kishû Izuchi. Their collaborations include *Glitter* (1997), a post-apocalyptic sci-fi pastiche set in a Tokyo that has been destroyed by an earthquake, and the nurse drama *Withered Flowers* (2000).

Summer of Listening Carefully (2001), hailed as the third best title of its year by *PG* magazine, is a good example of Enomoto's talents, featuring a sparky performance from its leading lady Mayu Asada and a lightweight, though intricately-plotted, romantic-comedy scenario in the Nora Ephron mode, all shoehorned into the format of that good old fallback of the *Molester Train* sub-genre. It was originally released as *Molester Train: Touch and Surprise* and re-titled to *Express Molester Train: Dirty Fingertips* for its video release, but contrary to the usual formula, it is the man being pestered in this instance. The film opens with mild-mannered white-collar worker Yûji pressed up against Asada's cute Office-Lady-with-glasses during his early morning ride into work. As she begins to pleasure herself by rubbing up against him, he finds himself unable to believe his luck – until she jabs a pin in his hand and gets off at the next stop, waving to him teasingly as the train pulls away. It is only when Yûji reaches the ticket gate at his station

that he notices his wallet is gone and has been replaced by a woman's purse in another pocket.

This entire incident, however, had been witnessed by a plainclothes policeman, who also notices that her accomplice and the lynchpin to a larger black market enterprise, a sleazy-looking guy named Umeda (played by Kazuhiro Sano), was standing right by them in the crowded carriage with a poker-faced expression on his face as she passed the pick-pocketed wallet back to him. Umeda is subsequently arrested. When Yûji gets home that evening he is surprised to find the shrill-voiced gamine who ruined his morning out of her office garb and slouching around on his sofa, glugging beer. Her attempts to offer some sort of explanation as to what had happened earlier leave him even more flustered and confused than before. Fortunately, she slips out of Yûji's apartment before his staid-looking girlfriend (Hazuki) gets home and catches the two in a compromising position, but from then on his life looks set to be plagued by the little minx as he finds himself involuntarily drawn from the straight and narrow path his life usually follows.

The director who has perhaps demonstrated the most consistent vision throughout his oeuvre is Shinji Imaoka. Born in Osaka in 1965, Imaoka dropped out of Yokohama City University in 1990 and joined Shishi Pro. There he served as an AD for directors like Zeze, the lesser-known Mototsugu Watanabe and, outside of pink, on *Immoral*, the final film of the late, great Tatsumi Kumashiro, which was released in 1995, the same year Imaoka made his own directing debut with *Waiting for the Comet*. For most of his early filmmaking career however, he assisted Hisayasu Satô, although their approach to the genre couldn't be more different.

Stylistically, perhaps even more so than any of the other new directors, Imaoka's nearest point of reference is Toshiki Satô. His films possess the same deadpan comic touch that masks a painfully honest emotional core, although Imaoka's peculiar brand of pathos is less wry and more sentimental. A further similarity is his rather restrained approach to the sex scenes, which are relatively sparse and often occur in near darkness or occluded by foreground objects, a factor which may not bother the readers of *PG* magazine who vote for the annual Best Ten, but which has hardly endeared him to the owners of the adult theatres who are reliant on pink film's core audience for their business.

At one point, Imaoka could be considered the most popular of this new wave of directors, among the pink film's ancillary fan base at least. His tribute retrospective *Biographies of New Japanese Artists of Principle*, held at the Athenée Français in 2000, broke the record for attendances previously held by Toshiki Satô,⁴⁴¹ and he was voted Best Director at the 2004 *PG* awards, with *Lunch Box* topping the Best Ten the same year and *Frog Song* at the number one spot in 2005.



above: Takeshi Itô consoles his distraught wife, played by Mitsuyo Suwa, in Shinji Imaoka's poignant *Despite All That* (1999). ©Kokuei/Shintoho

The content of both these films also made it easy for them to cross over to mainstream audiences, as they were subsequently picked up for a wider distribution in Japan – *Lunch Box* by Eurospace (under the title of *Tamamono*, referring to the bowling ball that plays a critical part in the plot) and *Frog Song* by Argo Pictures, who had also handled Meike's *The Glamorous Life of Sachiko Hanai* and *Bitter Sweet*. Probably many critics and viewers didn't even pick up on the fact that *Lunch Box* was originally a pink film that had played adult theatres a few years before, under the title *Mature Woman: Rutting Ball-Play*. After all, it barely looked like one. Like Zeze's *Crevice of Skin*, it was shot on 16mm and then blown up to 35mm to give it a grainier, artier look, and also, in another break with industry conventions, had its sound recorded live, rather than have its performers post-sync its moans and groans. It was also, in sexual terms, very mild, although curiously for some reason the director apparently insisted on shooting the sex scenes as the unsimulated 'real thing', even though this doesn't come across onscreen.

Imaoka's particular strength is his understated depiction of characters trapped in a rut, desperately reaching out for something they secretly know they can't have. His films often dwell on relationships between marginal characters – not only sexual relationships, but friendships too – relationships that



above: Young love: Mikio Satô and Atsuko Suzuki in *Despite All That*. ©Kokuei/Shintoho

might seem thoroughly odd to outsiders, but within the context of the narrative come across as natural and unforced. His characters are often thrown together by hazard. A bicycle crash serves as a prelude to a romantic affair in at least two cases – *Falling in Love* (1999) and *Lunch Box* (2004). In the first of these, marital infidelity with a random youth is seen as an easy quick-fix solution to alleviating a housewife's depression after her doctor tells her that she may never have a child, although ultimately her dallying outside the family nest proves more troublesome than it is worth. *Lunch Box* charts the brief but tragic love affair between Aiko, a simple and emotionally sincere mute girl who works at a bowling alley, and Yoshio, a postal worker whom she meets when she accidentally knocks him from his bicycle during his morning rounds. Aiko finds herself increasingly drawn to this spiky younger man, and initially he reciprocates. Unable to express herself verbally, she doles out affection by means of the lovingly-created *bentô* boxes she delivers to his workplace, despite the jibes of his co-workers and the aggressive sexual rivalry of one of the female members of staff (a role which saw Lemon Hanazawa awarded with one of the Best Newcomer Awards at that year's Pink Taishô). If there is one generalisation that can be made about the balance of power in sexual relationships in Japan, it is that the girls do the chasing far more than the boys. When Yoshio decides to call it a day, Aiko finds it incredibly difficult to let go.

Few of the characters in Imaoka's films look like sex film performers or conform to sex film stereotypes and modes of behaviour. They are childish, vulnerable and needy, often abnormally so, like the erratic housewife in *Falling in Love* whose husband indulges her every whim as if she were a spoilt child. These are characters who, from their outward behaviour, society often dismisses as crazy, but whom Imaoka shows have the same desires and needs to be loved as everyone else. It is a testament to Imaoka's directing talents that he makes us feel so at ease in the company of such protagonists, who often come across as borderline mentally unstable.

Indeed, putting mental health issues at the forefront of several of his films is a particularly bold move for a filmmaker working in a genre whose ultimate intention is sexual titillation. Portraits of dysfunctional families are one thing, but putting a chronically depressed housewife at the centre of a pink film and making the audience see through her eyes really is quite an extraordinary achievement. *Despite All That* (1999) plays like a pink film version of John Cassavetes's *A Woman Under the Influence* (1974) – or if we look closer to home, Makoto Shinozaki's *Okaeri* (1995) – albeit with a dark comic touch. It finds its closest equivalent in the pink film world with Toshiki Satô's *Empty Room*, which Imaoka wrote two years later. Here the drama is pared down completely to four



above: Imaoka's *Lunch Box* (2004), retitled again for its mainstream release as *Tamamono*, meaning 'bowling ball'.

characters. The focus is Naoko (Mitsuyo Suwa), a housewife wrestling with manic depression who also works part time as an art teacher at a local high school. Neither her life inside nor outside the house brings her any joy. In an early scene we see her at work, etching one of her students, who takes one look at the finished portrait and, declaring that there's "no love in it," runs off with it and rips it up in disgust. Her actions instigate an altercation between teacher and student that soon escalates into comic levels of hyperbole, filmed in long shot in a single take.

Naoko is hardly any more stable back at home. Her daily domestic chores, as indicated by the recurrent motif of her chopping cabbage at the kitchen sink, fill her with an insuppressible urge to take the knife to her wrists, and she makes frequent beelines to hide in the closet every time things become too much for her. Fortunately, Naoko is blessed with a loving and incredibly indulgent husband, Yoshio (played by Takeshi Itô), who selflessly takes much of the blame for her unhappiness on his own shoulders and attempts to break through to her by dressing up in women's clothing and masquerading as a third person confidante named Yoshiko to tell her how much he loves her. (He also seems pretty tolerant about having to exist on a diet of chopped raw cabbage every night, too!) Yoshio sees the underpinnings to her

unhappiness as sexual, attributing their problems to his near impotence, although there is no indication as to whether this is really the case. He comes up with the idea of peppering things up in the bedroom by buying her a school uniform so that they can indulge in a bit of role-playing, although he forgets the one last finishing touch, the baggy *furu* socks. As Naoko is dispatched off to the convenience store clad in her new schoolgirl garb to buy some, she bumps into one of her students, Kimiko (Atsuko Suzuki).

Though initially embarrassed, the shared uniforms put teacher and student on an equal level. The following day, Naoko visits her new friend, and is horrified to discover that Kimiko's parents have abandoned her to fend for herself in a cluttered apartment shared only by Tokio (Mikio Satô), a similarly parentless boy of the same age who occasionally dosses on the sofa. Over the ensuing course of the film, Naoko and Kimiko's relationship oscillates between that of teacher-student, mother-daughter, and high school chums, and Kimiko is soon adding a very palpable new dynamic to Naoko's home life after she is invited to stay at the house Naoko shares with her husband. Naoko warns Yoshio "not to get any funny ideas" with the nubile young guest, as the two friends end up sharing a bed together, leaving the man of the house masturbating alone on the sofa surrounded by

discarded tissues. Things turn sinister when it is obvious that Kimiko has adopted a cuckoo-like role, attempting to push Yoshio from the cosy nest he is trying to make with his wife, but when she attempts to push her friendship with the older woman on to a new and more dangerous level, Naoko draws a line in the sand. The jealous schoolgirl retaliates by abducting Yoshio and keeping him hidden in her apartment, stripping him naked and binding him, before scrawling obscenities on his bare: 'baka' ('idiot'); 'ero-jiji' ('dirty old man'); 'roricon' ('Lolita complex'); and 'manko yarô' ('cunt guy'). It is only in his absence that it becomes clear just how much Naoko is reliant on the supportive presence of Yoshio/Yoshiko for her emotional stability.

Imaoka's women may not be capable of verbalising their emotions in a particularly articulate fashion, but they are certainly passionate, often expressing their feelings with physical violence. *Frog Song* opens with its protagonist, Akemi (Konatsu), braining her husband with a vodka bottle for some undisclosed transgression. After storming out of the house, she comes to blows with another woman in the all-night *manga kissa*⁴⁴² where she is sheltering for the night after snatching a particular comic book she wants to read from the hands of this stranger. This scuffle forms the beginning of an unlikely friendship between Akemi and Kyôko (Rinako Hirasawa), whose current existence as a prostitute is a far cry from her higher aspirations to be a manga artist. After getting to know each other better, Kyôko invites Akemi to stay over at her

apartment, to spend some time away from home to think about her marriage. Akemi is no trouble at all – though she is quietly disapproving of Kyôko's lifestyle – as she sits quietly in the corner of the room while her new friend entertains her clients, but eventually the two women come to a deeper understanding of what makes each of them tick.

The Japanese title of *Frog Song* derives from an oft-used pun in the Japanese language surrounding the usage of the word *kaeru*, meaning 'frog' as a noun and 'to go home' as a verb: when written in the phonetic *hiragana* script as it is here, rather than with the *kanji* ideogram, the title could just as well be 'Going Home Song'.⁴⁴³ This motif works its way into the film in both the stuffed toy Akemi carries around, clutched tightly to her chest, and the full-body frog costume she finds outside a junk shop, as well as the flamboyant Bollywood-style musical number the cast members perform with great brio just outside the exit of Shimokitazawa train station at the end of the film – another key to the popularity of Imaoka's films is that they often end on such uplifting high notes.

Which just about raps up the discussion of the *shichifukujin*... almost. The reason Yoshitaka Kamata has been rather glossed over is that he has been absent from pink filmmaking almost from the time that these figures became grouped together beneath one heading as new directors to emblemise a new era. One can't say for certain whether this departure is permanent, but it seems ironic that, in effect, during the



above: *Frog Song* (2005), another heartwarming title from the persistently popular Shinji Imaoka.
©Kokuei/Shintoho



above: Though its director, Teiichi Hori, is not a member of the new wave of directors known as the Seven Lucky Gods, *Hanging in the Air* (2003) represents an archetypical work of the period from the studio Kokuei. ©Kokuei/Shinto

early 21st Century period the Seven Lucky Gods actually only consisted of six members, and only three of these – Tajiri, Meike and Imaoka – can really be considered as having made much of a stir outside the primary arena in which they work.

In looking at developments in the pink film in the new millennium (or at least its more aspirational end), the Seven Lucky Gods are more useful as a gauge of how the landscape had changed since the era of the Four Devils, and in helping one understand how certain figures driving the pink industry – most notably Kokuei's Keiko Satô – were continuing in their attempts to foster new filmmaking talent and win over new audiences outside of the pink theatres. In this respect, Zeze's 'yowai' criticism is a little unfair, as although the directors develop their own projects and obviously hold the ultimate responsibility for the finished project, it is Keiko Satô who holds the purse strings and decides what goes into production. Satô herself claims that she likes directors who can make sincere films that manifest the distinctive personality or character of their makers, not just run-of-the-mill adult program pictures. Shouldn't the Kokuei 'house style' be best attributed to her getting behind and nurturing certain filmmaking personalities, and thereby encouraging them to make films that fit better with the times?

It makes sense to draw the conclusion that, while the Four Devils' ambivalent approach to the tastes of their primary audience is what leant them their original opprobrium and led to their early outcast status (a status which they fought to turn into something positive), the new grouping might be better thought of as a kind of branding exercise for Kokuei – a case of putting the cart before the horse, or perhaps the auteur before the movies. And the fact that there are seven of them is immaterial. There are also other directors who have made *shichifukujin*-like films dealing with *shichifukujin*-like subjects.

The 2004 New School of Pink-Movies showcase mentioned earlier included recent films from Toshiki Satô and Takahisa Zeze, the two *shitenno* who maintained their links as filmmakers to Kokuei, as well as two less familiar figures. One of these new faces was actually a relative old-timer: Daisuke Gotô's main claim to fame is that, after serving out his apprenticeship at Nikkatsu during the '80s, he made his debut with the very last ever Roman Porno film, *Bed Partner*, released with Katsuji Kanazawa's *The Love Game Isn't Over* on 28 May, 1988. During the '90s he worked mainly in the V-cinema market, contributing such delights as *Sasori in the U.S.A.* (1997, a spin-off of the Meiko Kaji-starring *Female Convict Scorpion* films from the '70s), and a few



above: A new direction for Kokuei: Rinako Hirasawa and Kazuhiro Sano in Yûji Tajiri's comical *The Strange Saga of Hiroshi The Freeloading Sex Machine* (2005). ©Kokuei/Shintoho

entries in the new straight-to-video *Zero Woman* series (similarly spun off from the '70s Toei Pinky Violence film *Zero Woman: Red Handcuffs*, directed by Yukio Noda and starring Miki Sugimoto), before moving on to make films for Shintoho. His self-penned *A Cow At Daybreak* (2003)⁴⁴⁴ sees the pink film at its most inventive, albeit frankly bewildering. It tells of a young widow who finds a unique way of protecting her senile dairy farmer father-in-law from claims by his scheming daughter in the big city that he is no longer in any fit mental state to look after the family farm: every morning as the sun begins to rise, she creeps off to the cowshed, disrobes and gets down on all fours in anticipation of the ageing rustic's arrival with the milking pail, in order to protect him from a cataclysmic revelation that would push him over the edge – that his last remaining prize heifer has already kicked the bucket.

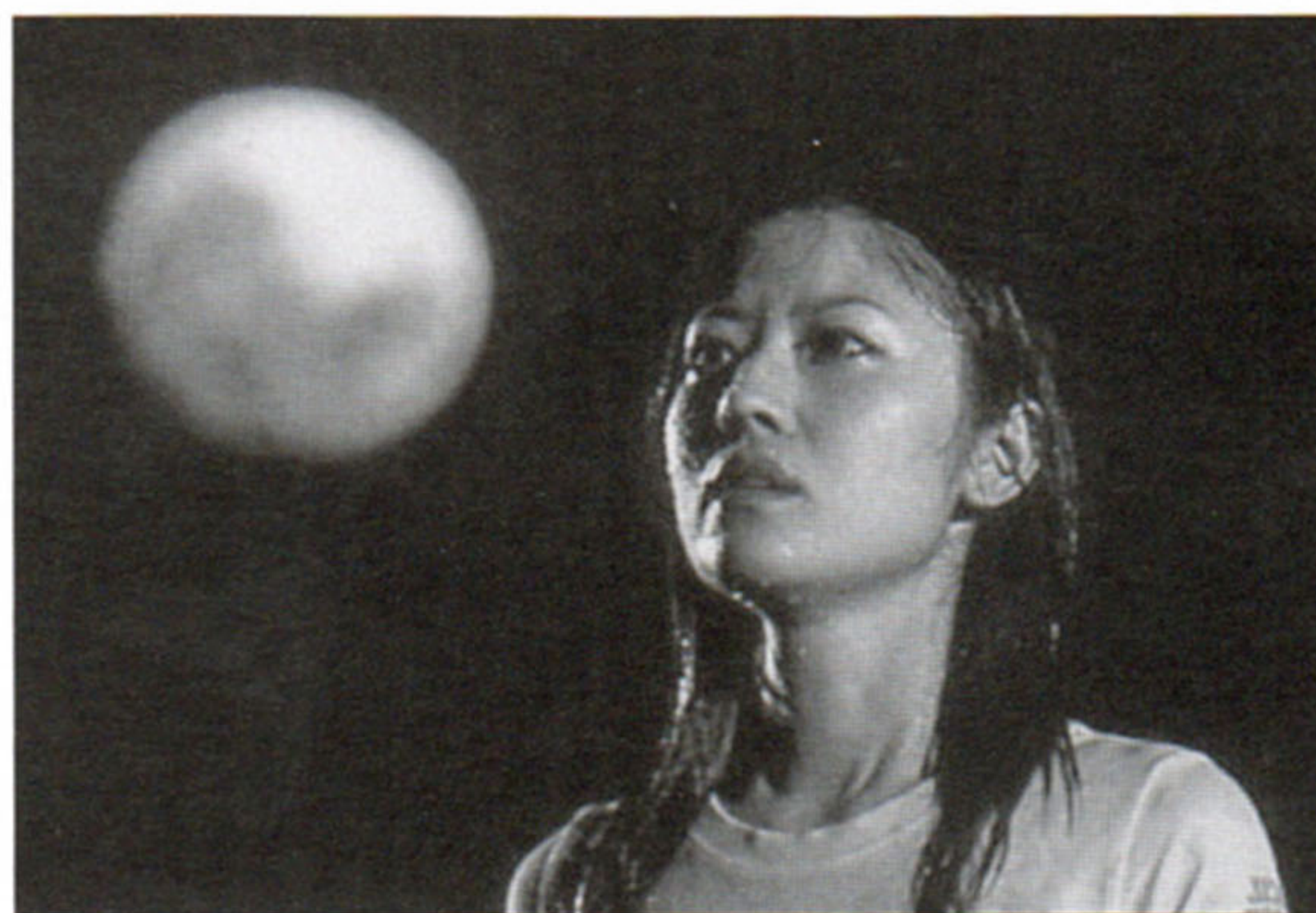
Also screening at the event was *Hanging in the Air* (2003), the debut film of fledgling director Teiichi Hori after years waiting in the wings as an assistant at OP Eiga. It portrays a cohabiting couple, Osamu (Katsu Onda) and Mika (Yuki), as they struggle on with a relationship that has lapsed into mere habit, with Osamu finding himself unable to commit to anything as permanent as marriage. He works for a *deriheru* agency (short for 'delivery health', the euphemistic name for what is basically a call-girl delivery service) ferrying around girls by car to their various *rendezvous* points for their diminutive pimp (played by Mame Yamada, a dwarf actor who features in a number of more mainstream movies from this time, most notably Toshiaki Toyoda's *Blue Spring* and *Nine Souls*). Temptation is always close at hand, most conspicuously in the form of the bright-eyed and cheery Chiaki (Nikki Sasaki). Meanwhile, Mika receives daily visits at the take-out *bentô* store where she works part-time, from a serious-looking young man who orders the same fried calamari lunchbox meal every day while simultaneously declaring his undying love. One day, he finally plucks up the courage to ask her out, and Mika decides to take the plunge.

In terms of subject matter, *Hanging in the Air* represents the quintessential Kokuei film of its era,

fitting comfortably into a tradition of relationship dramas established by Yûji Tajiri and Mitsuru Meike, with *furûta* characters who might be familiar to the type of contemporary viewers found at the fan events, or who watch the films on video (although presumably less so for the average pink theatre patron). These are intelligent, independent young people existing on low-wage but flexible part-time *furûta* employment outside of the demanding yet relatively secure world of the salaryman lifestyle, emotionally and economically adrift, unwilling to commit themselves fully to a shared future as they wait on the margins for something better to come along.

The final idea I would like to play with when assessing the legacy of both *shitenno* and *shichifukujin* is that it might be better to view *pinku eiga* as a screenwriter's cinema, rather than a director's one. Three of the Four Devils owed much of the cohesiveness of their vision to their strong collaborative relationships with their writers (the one exception being Kazuhiro Sano, who wrote his own films, thus even further emphasising this point): Hisayasu Satô with Shirô Yumeno; Toshiki Satô with Masahiro Kobayashi; and Takahisa Zeze with Kishû Izuchi. The last two screenwriters also scripted the early films of some of the Seven Lucky Gods: Kobayashi wrote scripts for Mitsuru Meike and Toshiya Ueno; Izuchi wrote for Toshiro Enomoto and Rei Sakamoto. Zeze wrote Kamata's *No Woman No Cry*. That some of the films of Mitsuru Meike and Yûji Tajiri share a similar approach is probably because they were written by Naoko Nishida. If Shinji Imaoka's oeuvre seems the most consistent out of them all, it is because he writes his own scripts.

It is only natural that all of these directors, and the company that produced their films, should evolve over time to find new forms and new audiences. In this respect, the surprise success of *The Glamorous Life of Sachiko Hanai* seems to have played a highly significant role in the type of films Kokuei started making in the second half of the decade, or at least the ones subtitled for foreign screenings. Meike's film (or if we look at it another way, Takao Nakano's film) suggested a potentially huge market outside of Japan for erotic



above: Rinako Hirasawa as Hiroshi's extremely tolerant lover in *The Strange Saga of Hiroshi The Freeloading Sex Machine*. ©Kokuei/Shintoho



above: Veteran pink performer Shirô Shimomoto as the perverted old carouser Uncle Takashi in Shinji Imaoka's ludicrous *Uncle's Paradise* (2006).
©Kokuei/Shintoho

films with narratives and real performances – a type of filmmaking that has effectively died out in the rest of the world. If the sexual shenanigans came accompanied by the same strain of outrageous humour and overall sense of weirdness that foreigners identify with Japanese pop culture, then such films could easily be sent to foreign festivals. After all, the international film festival circuit, especially for cult or Asian films, has changed rapidly since the beginning of the millennium. Small specialist festivals or film events were springing up all over the world, and not just exclusively for Japanese cinema. The rise of the internet and the efforts of individual film fans who lived in the country and spoke the language ensured that information about the films was no longer in the hands of a small elite of gatekeepers. Consequently, distributors and sales agents became less motivated by prestigious prizes that seldom equated to box office bucks back at home, but in films that they could charge screening fees for, earning back some money as they travelled the international circuit. In this new environment, cheaply-produced kitsch like Naoyuki Tomomatsu's *Zombie Self-Defense Force* (2006), Makoto Shinozaki's interminable *Cop Festival* (2003-) movies, or the eccentric films of Minoru Kawasaki – such as *Calamari Wrestler* (2004), *Executive Koala* (2005), and *The World Sinks Except Japan* (2006) – presented a new international face for Japan, screening far more widely than the latest blockbusters from the major studios or the latest works from serious *auteurs* like Shinji Aoyama and Naomi Kawase (who remained the reserve of the traditional 'A list' festivals of Cannes, Berlin and Venice). Festival programmers were well aware how easy it was to sell-out screenings by luring curious foreigners in to watch Japanese sex films (no mean feat with a venue like the Udine Far East Film Festival's Teatro Nuovo which, at just shy of 1000 seats, has a considerably larger capacity than the average pink theatre), and there were obviously those in Japan who took note.

The person best embodying Kokuei's new approach to the international market in the post-

Sachiko Hanai era is again not a director, but a scriptwriter, Fumio Moriya. Moriya's energetic, unpredictable concoctions of slapstick and slap'n'tickle come leavened with a healthy measure of absurdism, and can be viewed as perfect testaments to the transgressive nature of both *pinku eiga* specifically, and Japanese low-budget independent cinema in general. At the same time, one can also argue that with *The Strange Saga of Hiroshi the Freeloading Sex Machine* (2005) and *Uncle's Paradise* (2006) respectively, the directors Yûji Tajiri and Shinji Imaoka delivered the least satisfactory works of their careers. They were certainly the least typical.

Tajiri's was the first such comedy to follow Meike's films into the wider world. The saga begins with the happy-go-lucky Hiroshi making the acquaintance of single-mom Haruka while riding on a bus out in the countryside, when he accidentally upsets the box of crickets her five-year-old son Yûichi is brandishing proudly, spilling its contents all over the floor. Despite the ensuing rumpus, Hiroshi nevertheless manages to charm Haruka and, over the course of the sweltering summer that ensues, comes to occupy a more central place in her small-town rural life and her even smaller apartment. His doltish good humour makes him a perfect companion for the young boy, and also ingratiates him with the local community of idlers, while his lovemaking with Haruka is as athletic as it is bizarre (including one unforgettable lewd act with a cucumber). However, a dark storm looms large when Haruka's ex comes knocking at the door. Hiroshi is challenged to a showdown, but not of the conventional 'pistols at dawn' variety: it comes in the form of the cricket-wrestling craze that has swept over the whole town. In the meantime, Haruka gets tired of the infantile competitiveness of the men and her attention is distracted elsewhere.

Imaoka's *Uncle's Paradise* is very much cast in the same mould and, like many of Kokuei's films of the period, features the gormless-looking Mutsuo Yoshioka in the lead role. This time round, squid-jigging replaces cricket-wrestling as Haruo, something of a local Captain Ahab, attempts to land a legendary tentacled



above: Mutsuo Yoshioka sitting in a bath of squid. A scene from *Uncle's Paradise*.
©Kokuei/Shintoho

whopper reported to be hiding somewhere out there in Tokyo Bay, with his girlfriend Rika lending her support despite the lingering presence of a jealous ex-boyfriend, Iwata. Arriving in town to destabilise this narrative further comes Haruo's roguish Uncle Takashi, played by *pinku eiga* stalwart Shirô Shimomoto, looking for "a new start" and a place to stay for a while. A natural born loser, Uncle Takashi proves quite a handful for Haruo, permanently quaffing *genki* vitamin drinks while trying to get it on with every female within reach and literally marking his territory by scrawling his name on their bare backs with a red marker pen once the act is done. But the preternaturally priapismic blood relation's attempts at starting a new life nevertheless seem doomed to failure, as a part-time job as a pizza deliveryman comes to an obvious end when he falls off his scooter. Things take a more serious turn for the worse however, when, while praying at a Shinto shrine, Takashi receives a deadly shot of venom from a snake which transfixes itself to his privates, and he is whisked off to the land of the dead. It is left to Haruo to play Orpheus and take the trip down to the underworld to rescue his errant uncle from the grasp of Takeshi Itô's Enma, King of Hell, but it soon becomes pretty obvious that when you're someone like Uncle Takashi, hell ain't such a bad place to be.

Both these similar Moriya-penned works play well in a structureless, no-holds-barred nonsense sort of way, chockfull of some admittedly very funny belly laughs. But looking at the most recent work of the leading lights of the new breed, who might very well be the very last new wave of *pinku eiga* directors to make any sort of impact as a group (and this also includes Toshirô Enomoto's infantile semi-comic *Nikomihoppy* (2006), in which the winning run from the titular racehorse serves as the catalyst for a pining jilted lover to go in search of the girl who ditched him the year before), the concerns originally articulated by Zeze as to why and for whom the directors are making their films seem more pertinent than ever. From self-absorption to hedonism, not only have the Seven Lucky Gods distanced themselves from the bigger picture of the generation before; in their retreat into the realms of complete fantasy they have also moved on from even attempting to reflect the emotional circumstances of their own generation.

These films might well be momentary digressions in the careers of their makers, and anyway, surely one of the things that is interesting about the pink film is its diversity. We have already seen how Kokuei's films are not really representative of the entire industry, and how the modern market has now come to be made up of further distinct audiences, both at home and abroad, outside of its core. But herein lies the question on which the future of the pink film depends; what is happening to this core audience, and can the industry survive without it?

Footnotes

421 For an example, see m@stervision's homepage on www.ne.jp/asahi/hp/mastervision.

422 A New School of Pink-Movies played at the Athenée Français from 24 August to 2 September, 2004, while the six-film Toshiya Ueno retrospective played at the same venue on the weekend 3-4 September, 2004.

423 Domenig, Roland, "Skin Racers – The P-1 Grand Prix". The essay was distributed as a separate leaflet within the 2002 Udine Far East Festival Catalogue on an A4 sheet of (pink) paper with the text printed on both sides.

424 Ibid.

425 Domenig, Roland. "Vital Flesh: the Mysterious World of Pink Eiga."

426 *Heiwa* means 'peace', while *boke* comes from the verb *bokeru*, 'to become senile' – the implication is that the *heiwa boke* generation have forgotten about the war, and it doesn't affect them any more.

427 Nornes, Abé Mark, *Forest of Pressure: Ogawa Shinsuke and Postwar Japanese Documentary* (University of Minnesota Press), pg 128-150 analyses in some detail this transition in Japanese documentary.

428 Nornes, Abé Mark, Ibid, pg 256.

429 Private conversation with the director. Matsue has espoused his filmmaking philosophy on several occasions in print, notably in a double interview with the head of the Company Matsuo AV production house conducted by Alex Zahlten for *Eiga Geijutsu* 408 (Summer 2004), pg 62-65; an in the English language in *Vertigo* vol 3. no 4. Winter 2007, in the article, "Extremes of Independence" written by himself (pg. 12-14) and Maggie Lee's interview with him "Documentary Laid Bare: Tetsuaki Matsue", pg 20-21.

430 Lee. Ibid. Note that "Company Matsuo" is actually the name the director works under, as opposed to a company name. He keeps his real first name well-hidden, which is a little ironic given how much else he exposes in his videos.

431 For example, www.midnighteye.com/interviews/takahisa_zeze.shtml.

432 All Tajiri's quotes from unpublished interview with author at Nippon Connection in Frankfurt on 22 April, 2006.

433 It's been mentioned already that when used in a sexual context, *iku* means 'to come'. Depending on where it is used, it can also mean 'to go', which sounds more natural in this particular case.

434 Somewhat surprisingly, given how *Rustling in Bed* seems to so emblemise the female-centric *pinku eiga* narrative, the scripts for this and Tajiri's next film *Pantyless Molester Train: I Saw It!* (2000, produced by Shintocho, not Kokuei) are both the work of a man, Kôsuken Takeda, as is *Convulsions*, written by Hideaki Yoshida.

435 It screened on 2 February, 2007 at 1.25am as *Die zauberhafte Welt der Sachiko Hanai* in Germany, and under its English title in France.

436 Dargis, Manohla. "From Call Girl to Kant Girl in a Flash of White Panties". Movie review in *The New York Times*. 13 April, 2007.

437 Land, Joshua. *Time Out New York*. Issue 602: 12-18 April, 2007.

438 Aaron Hillis. "The Glamorous Life of Sachiko Hanai" review. *Village Voice*. 10 April, 2007.

439 Screen Edge's DVD unusually opts for the original pink title of *Sex Friend Nurezakari*, rather than the director's title.

440 The eccentric filmmaker-poet-novelist Sono, incidentally, is no stranger to the world of the pink film himself. Though his own background as a director is based in more experimental works such as his 1990 Pia-supported 16mm feature debut *Bicycle Sighs*, he gained some notice for his appearance in Tarô Araki's 1999 work for Ôkura, *Humoresque*.

441 Domenig, Roland, "Skin Racers – The P-1 Grand Prix". Ibid.

442 Or *manga kissaten*, a 24-hour café-cum-library where one can read comic books, watch DVDs, surf the internet, etc.

443 Another example is *A Laughing Frog*, the title of Hideyuki Hirayama's 2002 blackly comic look at divorce.

444 Gotô's film was the only one at the event not produced by Kokuei, though it was distributed by Shintocho who, as has been mentioned often, also handle Kokuei's films. The original pink title marketed the film as part of the *Molester Father-in-Law* series.

Final Curtain?

Since the early years of the 21st Century, a good number of titles produced by Kokuei have enjoyed a surprising level of exposure outside of Japan, either via distribution on DVD or thanks to screenings at film festivals, spurring-on interest and discussion about the pink film genre and a new wave of appreciative viewers overseas. Unfortunately, due to the expenses involved, Kokuei only prepares subtitled prints of two of its films per year (which is at least two more than the other companies), but in any case, overseas interest alone is not enough to sustain a larger industry with an overall output of 100 films a year.

While Kokuei is far from the be-all-and-end-all of the pink film genre, it is difficult to know how far to go in describing the recent works of the other companies, as it is unlikely that many will ever be made available to viewers outside of Japan. But it is certain that restricting discussions of *pinku eiga* to this one company will give a very limited idea as to where it may be heading.

In the pages of *PG* magazine and on fan websites, for example, the individual directors who comprise the Seven Lucky Gods are afforded no real privileged status above their contemporaries, and indeed, in recent years it would seem that there has been

something of a lull in the popularity of their films among fans. At the 19th Pink Taishô awards held on 14 April, 2007 for the best films of 2006, Imaoka's *Uncle's Paradise* was the highest-rated offering from the company, clocking in at eighth position, with Tajiri's *Loose Woman: Getting Wet At Noon* following at number nine. The three films that occupied the top three spots were all released by OP Eiga: *Love Flavour Udon* (released to pink theatres as *Fascinating Young Hostess: Sexy Thighs*), *Tobi-Uo* (aka *Miss Hotel Call Girl: Healing Induction*)⁴⁴⁵ and *Hostess Madness: Unparched Nectar*.

Born in 1974, the director of the first two of these, Tetsuya Takehora, is not a name most people outside of the most immediate pink film fan circles would recognise. Yet in recent years – after serving a five-year apprenticeship as an assistant director at OP Eiga and making his debut with *PEEP SHOW* in 2004 – his unique brand of lightweight erotic comedy has clearly proven popular with *PG* readers. In the summer of 2007 he became the subject of a four-film retrospective at Tokyo's Theatre Pole-Pole Higashi Nakano, the third event in a new initiative to bring pink films to the mainstream, called R18 Love Cinema Showcase. R18 Love Cinema Showcase Vol.1, held in May 2006,



above: Keeping it in the family: mother and daughter Akane Yazaki (left) and Azusa Sakai (right) and victim in Yutaka Ikejima's *Family Gets Rude Chapter 1: Perverts' Fun* (2004). ©Shintoho



above and opposite: AV idol Aoi Sora in a rare pink film appearance in *Uniform Beauty: Shag Me Teacher!* (2004), directed by Hidekazu Takahara. ©Shinto

comprised of films made by a number of directors connected with Kokuei, while Vol. 2 was devoted to Shinji Imaoka. Therefore the focus on Takehora is significant in that it was for an OP Eiga director.

We've encountered Yutaka Ikejima, the director of the third favourite at the 19th Pink Taishô awards, on several occasions so far, though not yet really focused on his activities as a director. Born in Tokyo on 30 March, 1948, and a graduate of Waseda University's literature department, as an actor Ikejima worked on stage as part of Shûji Terayama's Tenjô Sajiki troupe, though for his screen performances he has worked exclusively within *pinku eiga* and AV, making his screen debut in 1981 in Genji Nakamura's *Document Porno: Married Woman Prostitution Techniques*. His acting credits, of which there are literally hundreds, include titles by Hisayasu Satô, Ryûichi Hiroki and Yôjirô Takita, and he is still appearing in pink films to this day. As a director he has been just as busy. Since his debut with *The Masturbating Lesbians* for Xces in 1991, he has kept up a steady output far in excess of any of the Kokuei directors, averaging half a dozen films per year, and has so far accumulated a body of work consisting of more than a hundred titles. He produces his films through his own Cement Match

company, which, maintaining theatrical activities in parallel with its filmmaking ones (as well as staging regular plays, they also shoot *jishu eiga*), might be better described as an entourage than a production house. While most of Ikejima's pink films are commissioned by OP Eiga, he has had titles released by all the current major pink companies. He has also produced films by other directors, including Daisuke Gotô and Shigeo Moriyama, and oversaw the production of the ENK omnibus *The Gays in Wonderland* (1997).

Though none of his films have ever played overseas, Ikejima is spoken of as being the most successful figure in the industry today. He makes films cheaply, reliably and in a variety of styles that are popular with both the regular denizens of the *seijin eiga* theatre and the younger alternative audience who appreciate the genre for its cinematic aspects. And his films certainly don't skimp on the erotic side of things either.

Ikejima's *Family Gets Rude* diptych, released by Shinto in 2004, sees the pink film at its most efficient and entertaining, with the two parts making up for any lack of artistic ambition with a healthily good-humoured, if a little kinky, sense of rambunctious fun. *Chapter 1: Perverts' Fun* begins when timid and tongue-



tied Takashi (Naohiro Hiragawa) heads to a Go-Con social mixer in search of marriage material. He finds plenty of potential prospects to fill this hole in his life, but settles on the poised and elegant Ryôko (Akane Yazaki). Within months, he is married and has been taken into her family household. But these are no ordinary in-laws. His new mother-in-law, Masumi (Azusa Sakai), engages in cryptic conversations over the breakfast table, warning him not to go through the upstairs trapdoor from which a mysterious red light streams, leading into the attic where father is said to keep his ominous "collection". Meanwhile, Ryôko's mad sister (Lemon Hanazawa) remains locked in her bedroom, kept as a shrine to Leonardo DiCaprio, and periodically emerges to roam around the house wearing a skimpy white cotton shift and a garland of flowers on her head. Just as Takashi begins wondering whether he made the right decision to marry, he bumps into Sakura (Reiko Yamaguchi), his second potential choice from the girls present at the blind date where he met his perverted young bride.

Chapter 2: Unequalled Limits takes place in a parallel universe to the first film and uses the same characters, as Takashi heads to the same Go-Con party and comes away with a different choice of bride. In fact, his mind is more or less made up for him by the vivacious Sakura who, within minutes of them meeting, has feigned a

drunken dizzy spell in order to lure him to the toilets. Barely six months later, with a ring on her finger, she is firmly ensconced within his family home, occupying the seat of matriarch of the house, a role that had previously been taken by Takashi's recently deceased mother. But if our beleaguered hero was originally expecting marriage to complete his life of salaried stability, then it's time to think again. As Sakura's increasingly outlandish sexual demands see him scuttling, terrified, to the office every morning, he soon begins to rue his decision, especially when he bumps into Ryôko, the more refined eager beaver who lost out to Sakura at their first fateful meeting. Meanwhile, his lusty wife is busy back at the house working her way around the rest of the family, putting a smile back on the face of father (Kikujirô Honda), raising his decrepit grandfather from the near dead, and even subduing the jealous pout of his sister (Kaoru Akitsu).

OP Eiga's dominance, both in the 2007 fan awards and more generally in the number of titles it produces every year, suggests a better angle from which to look at the true face of the pink film industry. OP Eiga has remained steadfastly indifferent to overseas possibilities, although its films could prove popular if it did try and push them abroad. Neither has it tried to foster an equivalent 'movement' to the *shitenno* or the *shichifukujin*.



above: The Rambo-esque *Pervert in the Attic: Peeping Lewd Beast* (2003), one of many titles directed by the prolific Akira Fukamachi for Shintocho.
© Shintocho

However, Ikejima's name is often linked with three other filmmakers producing work financed and released by the company, who are viewed by writers and fans within the pink world in a more auteurist light than most of their peers. Yumi Yoshiyuki, highly regarded for her feminine take on a male-oriented genre, we have already encountered in an earlier chapter.

Of the other two, Minoru Kunizawa, the only one of the 'OP Four' not to have started out in the industry as a performer (though he did appear in small parts in a handful of films) began as an assistant to Satoru Kobayashi, and is as perennially popular with *PG* readers as he is prolific. His *Irresistible Angel: Suck It All Up* (2003) is an innovative and sexy *X-Men* spoof about a young woman who finds herself imbued with strange energy-sucking superpowers during an assault while she is of high school age. Her unharnessed energies initially result in the immediate vaporisation of her assailant, but continue to gush forth years later to disastrous effect whenever she is aroused by her husband. After consulting a faith healer for assistance, she finds herself whisked away and confined to another dimension where she is forced to engage in naked wrestling bouts with her arch-nemesis.

Tarô Araki began his career as an assistant director at Kokuei; his first credit is for Yukio Kitazawa's *Wet Virgin: Obscene Assault* (1985). He also worked on Kazuhiro Sano's *pinku eiga* directing debut, *Last Bullet* (1989), as well as appearing alongside the actor-director in a number of his films. However, for his own directorial debut he switched camps, and now produces work for OP Eiga, both gay and straight, through his company Taro Pro. His first film was *Caravan Guy* (1996), on which Minoru Kunizawa served as assistant director. Like Sano



above: Leering from the rafters: *Pervert in the Attic: Peeping Lewd Beast*. ©Shintocho

from the previous generation, Araki also acts in most of his films, as well as that of other directors, and scripts most of them. Though this might signify a more auteurist aspiration to be seen as the sole visionary behind his work, Araki takes a rather different view of his role as a filmmaker in this specific market than his contemporaries at Kokuei, by travelling around pink theatres across the country to ask exhibitors what kind of film they want.

Openly critical of those who make films not for their audiences, but for themselves, Araki has made a point of producing films that appeal to regular viewers, and especially at the more provincial theatres, setting his stories in locales that reflect their lives and surroundings. *Humoresque* (1999), actually penned by Yumi Yoshiyuki rather than himself in this case, tells the tale of a young couple who elope to the countryside where the wife (Hitomi Yamazaki) begins working in a *soba-ya* noodle store. One of the elderly patrons (Yûichi Minato) sees in her the image of his own wife in her younger days, triggering off affectionate memories of his estranged family. Along with its small-town setting, the film is notable for the appearance of *Suicide Circle* (2002) director Shion Sono as the young husband. It was also the only film not by one of the Kokuei directors to play at the pink film special retrospective held at the 24th Pia Film Festival in 2002.

Araki's idealistic ethos does highlight the significant role that exhibitors play in the business. Pink production companies like OP Eiga and Shintocho might well control production and distribution, but the venues to which they distribute their films – especially outside the metropolis – are predominantly privately owned and linked to these companies by long-standing contractual arrangements. The audiences for such program pictures at these core outlet points aren't necessarily going to be aware whether one individual film is better than another before they see it, but if the genre as a whole fails to meet expectations, then these venues will cease to attract new customers. So ultimately, the buck stops with the exhibitors. If the films are unpopular, then the venues will fail to attract audiences and will be forced to close.

Undoubtedly, the days of the *pinku eiga* would be shortly numbered if all the companies played a similar game to Kokuei, whose works Shintocho finds very difficult to distribute outside of Tokyo. (According to Keiko Satô, the basic procedure in the Shintocho-Kokuei relationship is that, "Some they buy, others they do for a 30% distribution commission.")⁴⁴⁶ The strategy adopted by president Keiko Satô, of using contacts established over the past decades within not just the pink industry, but also Japan's wider film and video industry to produce more ambitious or idiosyncratic works, has resulted in some impressive films, and has also had its benefits in other areas. A few of Kokuei's films are re-released to mini-theatres like Eurospace, and most are sold to specialist cable and satellite TV channels like WOWOW and Rainbow so, through

funding arrangements with other partners, individual budgets can be increased to the 5-6 million mark.⁴⁴⁷ But reaching out to new viewers at the expense of the old is not going to save the industry as a whole.

Shintocho itself has, nevertheless, released many interesting films that deliver more within their framework than just sex, made by directors like Akira Fukamachi, Takuaki Hashiguchi, Osamu Satô and others we've already mentioned (several of *shichifukijun* director Toshirô Enomoto's more recent works have been produced by this company, and not by Kokuei). Fukamachi's *Perverter in the Attic: Peeping Lewd Beast* (2003) was a mystery in the vein of Edogawa Rampo's *Stroller in the Attic*, boasting a tight script and a fine sense of period detail. The year is 1950, and life in the traditional home of the distinguished Sawatari family revolves around the sickly mistress of the house, Tamayo (Yukiko Kawase). Bedridden with an incurable disease, she is tended by her husband Sadayuki (Seiji Nakamitsu), cousin Satoko (Kanae Mizuhara), and her adoring personal maid Shino (Yôko Satomi), a young girl taken into the house after fleeing her former abode due to sexual ill-treatment. As Tamayo writhes feverishly on her futon, Shino proves remarkably handy at giving bed baths and devotedly curling up in the bed of her mistress to keep her warm. Meanwhile, Sadayuki finds himself falling for the dark charms of Satoko, all of which falls under the watchful gaze of a mysterious Peeping Tom, who prowls the attic and is conscious of all the family's dark secrets.

Osamu Satô's *Nurse Sisters: Pink Consulting Room* (2003) was built around the novelty of Yumeka and Nikki Sasaki appearing together onscreen for the very first time, although the erotic potential of using real-life sisters is underplayed in favour of a surprisingly heartfelt tale about relationships and fear of commitment. Their fictional counterparts, Chikako and Wakako, work as nurses and share an apartment, though this is where the similarity ends. While the sober and reliable Chikako is engaged in a serious relationship with Keiji (Nobuyuki Matsuda), her flighty younger sibling is embroiled in an affair with Tsukamoto (Kikujirô Honda), a married doctor at the small-town clinic where she works. One day, Chikako finds herself caught in an



above: Nikki Sasaki, with Nobuyuki Matsuda, as the sassy young nurse in Osamu Satô's *Nurse Sisters: Pink Consulting Room*. ©Shintocho

emotional maelstrom when Keiji proposes to her after they've made love in a motel, finding herself tongue-tied and unable to reply. His proposal dredges up uncomfortable memories of the departure of her father when she was a small girl, never to be seen again. Her resulting soul searching makes her realise she is not as different from her sister as she thought.

With *Mansion of the Senses: Wife's Ascension* (2004) and *The Slit-Mouthed Woman* (2005), Takuaki Hashiguchi revived the *pinku kaidan* sub-genre first practiced by Kinya Ogawa in the '60s. The latter, based on the traditional legend of the *kuchisake-onna*, whose face was cut into a fixed grimace by a jealous husband, coincided with a more orthodox J-horror take on the tale from Kôji Shiraishi, released in 2007.

Though the second largest company in terms of the number of films it distributes, Xces generally seems to be rather looked down upon by the rest of the pink film community. Its output of cheaply-produced program picture quickies, typified by the films of Sakae Niita, mainly seems content to deliver the mere basics, occasionally pushing the boundaries of AV in its levels of explicitness. While some of its releases do crop up in the PG Annual Best Ten, just how many overlooked gems there are in the company's back catalogue is a potential subject for further investigation. None of its regular directors appear to have been acknowledged through Uplink's Nippon Erotics DVD releases, nor promoted at events such as the R18 Love Cinema Showcase, or those held at the Athenée Français.

Essentially, no one seems to be championing Xces's films as anything more than they are.

Basic as it may be, the output of Xces does, at the very least, provide some indication as to the grassroots trends and tastes in the genre. For example, the 17th FIFA World Cup, held jointly in Japan and South Korea in 2002, marked the beginning of the *kanryû* boom in Japan, referring to the huge swell in popularity of Korean pop culture. This was also reflected for a brief period in Japanese sex films, as the alluring figure of the Korean woman briefly joined the ranks of housewives, nurses, air stewardesses, home tutors and office ladies as suitable camera fodder. Xces dabbled briefly in this short-lived fad, both importing and dubbing Korean softcore productions for the Japanese market, with titles like *Korean Wife: Afternoon Adultery* (2002) and *Korean Beautiful Sisters: Unfaithful Wife* (2003),⁴⁴⁸ as well as dispatching the veteran pink director Yukio Kitazawa to Seoul, where he made *Korean Wives: Hard and Wild* (2002). Kitazawa also made *Korean Masturbation Special* for the video company TMC at the same time, featuring the same performers, and in fact, it seems to have been this particular organisation, rather than any of the bona-fide pink film companies, who explored this sub-genre most thoroughly. Xces continued its fascination with the exotic with Futoshi Sakamoto's *The Temptation of White Skin: Russian Widow* (2004), starring a blonde-haired blue-eyed actress credited as, if one transliterates directly, Natâsha Tagirofu.

One exceptional release to have come from Xces is *Married Women Who Want a Taste* (2003), the pink film



above: Kyôko Kazama in Takuaki Hashiguchi's *Mansion of the Senses: Wife's Ascension* (2004), Shintohto's answer to *Juon: The Grudge*.

©Shintohto

debut of a former assistant to Minoru Kunizawa, Hideo Kijô, directing from his own script. In it, an oversexed former art teacher at a high school, now settled down and playing the dutiful housewife role, seduces one of her former students. She takes to inviting him back to her house on a daily basis as soon as her husband heads off to the office in the morning, eventually keeping him hidden away in the bedroom cupboard on a more permanent basis. The set-up might sound conventional, but the approach taken is anything but, unfolding with a hallucinogenic surface weirdness and sporting an abundance of surreal comic moments involving crashing kitchen crockery, peeping on the neighbours, and some innocent games with hamsters. Kijô's film also benefits from the tangible chemistry between its two attractive leads. The results are an almost perfect pink film, proving that there is life in large screen eroticism in places where you'd least expect it. Unfortunately, it appears to have neither been released on video in Japan nor made available by Xces on its download site.

As we reach the end of our history of *pinku eiga*, the inevitable question that raises its head is, where is the genre heading now? During my research for this book, a certain actor in the business who should probably remain nameless, when told that one of the questions this final chapter was to raise was, "What is the future of pink?," immediately burst into loud guffaws and shook his head dismissively and simply said "No future!" On the face of it, the traditional audience is declining and there are no signs currently of anyone new emerging from within the industry to shake things up.

The pink film has endured fallow periods like this in the past, as Takahisa Zeze acknowledged in 2003: "The first couple of years after I became a director, I thought there was something very precarious about pink films. You never knew what tomorrow might bring – the conditions were terrible. It was all, how should I say it, very momentary. About ten years have passed since then, and now we seem to have entered a period of remarkable stability. There is no more sense of crisis, as if we can continue to dawdle away the rest of our lives like this, and I think these circumstances aren't good either. When I set out to make a film I used to construct an enemy in my head that I had to fight, and then I constructed the film as if I were staging a protest against this enemy, but recently I can no longer see any enemy and so I can't construct these kind of films. So now I am struggling hard to find a new theme. I do feel that, in a broad sense, pink films themselves have become socially accepted."⁴⁴⁹

Zeze's comment highlights how the oppositional edge detectable in the genre's best works – like those made during its formative first decade or during its mid-life crisis in the early '90s – has all but vanished. The pink film industry originally established itself as an alternative production, distribution and exhibition system, in an era in which Japanese cinema was dominated by the major studios. First and foremost, the *eroduction* were *dokuritsu*



above: *The Slit-Mouthed Woman* (2005), a softcore rendition of a classic ghost story also filmed as a straight J-horror the same year by Kôji Shiraishi. ©Shinto

eiga, or 'independent' films. It offered a means for opportunistic new producers to nudge themselves into a new and open marketplace and thrust themselves to its forefront. Forty years on and the situation is almost completely the reverse. The major studios surviving from this era – Shochiku, Toei, Toho and Nikkatsu – now exist in sadly debilitated states compared with the Golden Age. Several are subsidiaries to other larger organisations. For example, Nikkatsu was acquired by Namco in 1996, who in turn sold it to the Japanese holding company Index Holdings in 2005. It currently distributes more foreign films than it produces, and owns only eight theatres (a total of 22 screens) across the country. Daiei no longer exists as a company, and its back catalogue is now owned by the Kadokawa publishing group. Production output is a fraction of what it was – even for a company like Shochiku – while Toei makes a large proportion of its revenue from video releases. Only Toho can really be described as 'dominant', in the sense that the top-grossing domestic titles of at least the past decade (especially in kids animation) have mainly been distributed by this company, but, as part of the Hankyu Hanshin Toho Group, film is marginal to other enterprises. The mainstream



above: Trembling beneath the covers in Takuaki Hashiguchi's *The Slit-Mouthed Woman*. ©Shinto

market is far more diffuse than when the majors exclusively distributed their work through their own theatre chains, while ironically the pink market has settled down so that as long as exhibition spaces for the product remain, there will always be companies to supply them.

And there's the rub. The reality of this exhibition situation may well prove the Achilles' heel for the pink film, as it exists at the moment. During the gold rush years of the '60s, the owners of the regional pink cinemas, which had previously filled their schedules with second runs of films from the major studios, made vast profits out of the popularity of the new *eroduction* genre – more so than the pink production companies, and because of the vast competition in the market, far more than the distributors. (The bigger companies like Ôkura made a lot of money precisely because, as well as being producers and distributors, they were also exhibitors with their own theatres, although as mentioned in a previous chapter, the company was split during the '70s so that OP Eiga is now a distinct entity involved only in film production, and not exhibition). Because of this, some exhibitors also moved into production in the next decade. But for both exhibitors and production companies alike, those who found that their margins were getting increasingly squeezed during the lean years of the '80s eventually lost interest in the pink film and dropped out of the market.

Many of the regional adult theatres that survive today are privately owned family businesses, run by the same individuals from the boom years of the '60s and '70s. Like the audiences, the exhibitors themselves are not getting any younger. Once this generation steps aside, it is going to be incredibly difficult to hand over the white elephant that the local *seijin eiga* theatre has become to any potential entrepreneurs believing there might still be profits in the theatrical sex film. As more theatres close, the number of venues booking prints is reduced and the margins for the production companies become even tighter.⁴⁵⁰

The pink film appears to be ticking along in a carefree fashion with its head in the sand, oblivious to the inevitable. If its days are indeed numbered, then this is not something that appears to be at the forefront of the minds of most of those working in the field. After all, the threats of Roman Porno and Adult Video didn't kill off the pink film as expected, and in financial terms it has so far been impervious to trends in the wider film industry and the economy as a whole. Talking about Kokuei's situation, in 2002 Keiko Satô explained, "It's often said that 'pink films are recession-proof' when times become bad. But we never experienced a 'bubble' period, either. Even during the 'bubble' economy, we didn't benefit from it, but during a recession, we aren't brought down by it. There's no such fluctuation."⁴⁵¹

One could phrase the question the other way around. Why does the pink film still exist, when its equivalent in other countries no longer does? Some believe that the answer is connected to the fact that

hardcore pornography is still illegal in Japan, or at least in the unfogged and uncensored form that one can find elsewhere. Once the mosaics have disappeared and there are no visual obstacles as to what can be seen, or the distribution channel provided by the internet completely circumvents the restrictions imposed by the censors, there will be no need for the milder alternative presented by the pink film.

Since the genre began in the '60s, numerous boundaries have been broken in relation to what is defined as 'public obscenity' (*waisetsu*), and thus what violates Article 175 of the Japanese Criminal Code. Though it is doubtful that even the most prudish of public officials would consider the naked human body to be 'obscene', traditionally the 'no pubic hair rule' has been considered the main governing principle in screen censorship in Japan, at least where sex is concerned. At the turn of the millennium however, this last frontier was also breached.

A pivotal moment in the easing of restrictions came in 1985, when British director Michael Radford threatened to withdraw his adaptation of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* from the first Tokyo International Film Festival if it was to be screened in a censored version. This came at a time during Japan's peak economic prosperity, when the country was rather sensitive about how it was perceived by the rest of the world. (This was one of the main reasons the festival was established in the first place – to demonstrate how Japan could stand, not only economically shoulder-to-shoulder with established Western powers in Europe and America, but culturally too.) To publicly bowdlerise one of the invited works in such a fashion so as to fit in with local customs – and in the inaugural year of what was launched as an international cultural event – appeared to be rather shooting oneself in the foot for some. Concerned about causing an international commotion, the officials relented and the film, along with Neil Jordan's *The Company of Wolves*, played at the festival with its 'hair scenes' intact (although they were fogged in both cases when the films subsequently went on general release).

In 1991, it became possible to show full female nudity in magazines and books (this was the year *Santa Fe*, the nude photo book featuring Rie Miyazawa, was published) and over the course of the following decade, un-obscured full frontal nudity (female only) in imported foreign films such as Jacques Rivette's *La Belle Noiseuse* (1991) and Sally Potter's *Orlando* (1992) became more prevalent, as long as it was not of an overtly sexual nature. Eirin, it might be argued, were more lenient towards foreign releases than domestic productions, though two films based on literary classics, Hiroto Yokoyama's arthouse adaptation of Yasunari Kawabata's *The House of Sleeping Beauties* in 1995, and Toshiharu Ikeda's larger production of Junichirô Tanizaki's *The Key* for Toei in 1997, finally introduced full-frontal female nudity to the Japanese film.

Though filmmakers are now free to show pubic hair, in reality this effectively restricts possibilities for domestic TV sales, and so it is not a widespread practice.

According to at least one industry member, Eirin are less lenient with sex films than mainstream productions, but nevertheless female full-frontal nudity began appearing in pink films around the turn of the millennium. Given the size and ephemeral nature of the industry's output, it is impossible to pinpoint exactly when this occurred, but full body shots of naked actresses are present in Takahisa Zeze's *Tokyo X Erotica* (2001), Shinji Imaoka's *Lunch Box* (2004), Meike Mitsuru's *The Glamorous Life of Sachiko Hanai* (2004), and Yûji Tajiri's *The Strange Saga of Hiroshi The Freeloading Sex Machine* (2005), to name but a few of Kokuei's titles. In each of these cases, it is notable that the nudity occurs in a non-sexual context, i.e. when the woman is alone, or if a man is present, he is at least partially clothed. Crotch shots don't seem to occur within the context of a sex scene.

Filmmakers have also explored novel and inventive ways of passing off as real onscreen that which is forbidden by law, or by subtly obscuring the action in a manner that allows it to make it to the screen in at least some form. Incredibly authentic-looking dildos standing in for the real thing, as in Sachi Hamano's *Greedy Housewives* films, are quite a common sight in the raunchier titles of Xces, OP Eiga and Shintocho, while in Yutaka Ikejima's *Family Gets Rude Chapter 1*, Lemon Hanazawa gets away with performing a pretty lewd masturbation scene, all the while sighing "Look at my flower!" as the camera focuses on a bouquet in the foreground so that the act itself, filmed in long shot, takes place in a background blur. The same film features a similar scene in a shower, focusing on the pools of water forming on the mirrored cubicle floor while giving us a defocused view, via the reflection, of the actress Akane Yazaki lathering herself.

That Eirin is tougher on pink films might seem strange, given how they play tucked discreetly away in specialist Adults-Only venues. It seems to boil down to the perceived intentions of the filmmaker. Unlike foreign directors like Bernardo Bertolucci or Catherine Breillat, pink's visionaries are, after all, working in a milieu not noted for its artistic motivation or achievements in the minds of the general public. For this reason, the 2004 release of Toei's big-budget SM fantasy *Flower and Snake*, directed by Takashi Ishii, represents another watershed moment in the history of Japanese film censorship, in that it was a fairly generously-budgeted major studio release and therefore enjoyed a far higher profile than anything from the pink filmmaking sector in the new millennium. It was also undoubtedly the company's financial clout and its long-established relationship with Eirin that got so much of its aberrant content past the censors.

Linked only by name and theme to the original story by Oniroku Dan, and very much in the spirit of the Roman Porno films that bore the writer's name, Ishii's film sees



above: Rinako Hirasawa pins down Mutsuo Yoshioka in Yûji Tajiri's *The Strange Saga of Hiroshi The Freeloading Sex Machine* (2005). ©Kokuei/Shintocho

the mature and sophisticated Shizuko (Aya Sugimoto) drugged and dragged off to be made the centrepiece of an elaborately mounted private rope show by a vengeful yakuza gang boss, in order to fulfil the vast unpaid debts accrued by her wealthy businessman husband (Renji Ishibashi). The setup is essentially a pretext for some of the most extravagant scenes of sexual cruelty and graphic nudity to be passed off as mainstream entertainment in any part of the world, and it is certainly the most explicit film to make it past Eirin's vigilance: though it was substantially cut, a large number of pubic shots remain in the film unfogged. At the time of its release, Ishii admitted he was making a film aimed at the older range of viewers, who would have made up the original market for the high-class, high production-value fantasies of Nikkatsu – a market no longer catered for by the major studios as it was in the '70s, as well as one quite distinct from that for pink cinema and AV. The film performed particularly well in the video market because, unlike many erotic straight-to-video titles, it actually delivered what it promised, and as a studio production it was placed among the mainstream films in most video rental outlets, not hidden at the back of the store in the AV section. A sequel, *Flower and Snake 2: Paris/Shizuko*, was released in 2005.

Despite these relaxations in censorship in both cinema and AV, images of male genitalia, penetration, explicit 'open shots' of female pudenda and the act itself are still deemed obscene, and are therefore fogged. *Bide-rin* lifted its ban on 'hair shots' in June 2006, while the digital mosaics continued to get smaller and finer, to the point of threatening to evaporate entirely. The producers and *bide-rin* censors were both really only playing lip service to the law. However, the industry received a rude wake-up call when, on the morning of 23 August, 2007, police raided approximately 20 locations suspected of either directly distributing, or facilitating the distribution of, obscene materials, including several AV distributors and at least one major electronics chain that sold their products. Echoing the indictment of several Eirin officials following the seizure of Nikkatsu's films in 1972, the police also raided the offices of *Bide-rin* for its part in eroding censorship standards. The implications of this

have yet to be felt, but there are certainly few who could argue convincingly that AV possesses the same artistic merits as Roman Porno did in the early '70s.⁴⁵²

The censorship angle might be a red herring in taking into account the future of the pink film as it stands at the moment. If one reduces the appeal solely down to sex, then it is difficult indeed to imagine it limping through to the next decade. But there are those who are clearly drawn to the genre's strengths as listed in this book's opening chapter – plot, character, craftsmanship, and a shared sense of cinema as a communal, not a private, experience. *Pinku eiga* clearly caters for a different market to AV, and fulfils a different role, as its directors fully realise. Yûji Tajiri seems well aware of the changing situation: "It's difficult to say what direction it will go, but obviously the number of pink films made every year will decline further. It might well be that in the future, there won't be any pink theatres any more. My hope is that there will still be films like pink films – erotic films that are more radical than the usual, or films with maybe more sex or more violence than the norm. There will also be mini-theatres still showing these films, not exclusively, like the pink theatres of today do, but just as a small part of their program. I am confident that this type of filmmaking will survive. Perhaps it will be more difficult to distinguish them from the other types of films, but I think they'll still be there. As long as cinema exists, so will the erotic genre, just like horror, comedy, action."⁴⁵³

For all their intentions, directors alone might not be enough to keep the industry rolling, and it is important to note that many of the larger figures in the field – company presidents like Kokuei's Keiko Satô and Shinto's Kôichi Gotô – have been present from the very outset. Both now past usual retirement age, one wonders how their companies will fare after they let go of the reins. As for the generation of filmmakers driving the genre since its early days, many have now either retired, died or migrated on to pastures new. Satoru Kobayashi, the man responsible for the very first *eroduction*, passed away on 15 November, 2001. Both Kôji Wakamatsu and Kan Mukai's production companies, so vital to the careers of many in this book, have continued to exist long since their founders moved on from the adult genre to more personal projects. Kan Mukai's most recent work as a director includes *Going West* (1997, described on his website as "Japan's first granny road movie"⁴⁵⁴), *Hometown* (1999), *Last Dance* (2001) and *School Reunion* (2004). The director sadly passed away on 11 June 2008, at the age of 70. In 2007, Wakamatsu premiered what he has hinted might be his last film at the Tokyo International Film Festival, *The United Red Army*, giving an insider angle on a part of modern Japanese history with which he was closely linked. As for Wakamatsu's surviving associates, Kazuo Komizu has left the film world entirely and, in an unexpected career turn, is now the proprietor of the Cosmic Dining Gaira curry restaurant. And following his return from the Middle East, in 2007 Masao Adachi saw

the release of his first film in 35 years, *Prisoner (Terrorist)*, an abstract piece based on the life of Kôzô Okamoto, which uses an existentialist framework to explore the inner and outer worlds of a man in solitary confinement as he wrestles in his mind with the revolutionary dogma that led to his crime and punishment. Adachi has announced plans for more experimental projects that attempt to further challenge the format of cinema itself.⁴⁵⁵

For many, including this writer, Adachi's reappearance in Japan refocused attention on what the pink film was, what it was capable of, and what it has become. Pornography shifts in form and definition with every generation. What was dismissed as exploitation upon its initial release might well be seen as art today, or at the very least, an important social document. Who can imagine how tomorrow's audiences and scholars may look back at today's pink film industry?

So let's not be too gloomy about the future. Impending crisis or not, for now *pinku eiga* is very much alive and kicking. New films continue to be made *en masse*; new directors are emerging every year, each bringing their own vision to the field and reflecting the dreams and concerns of their generation; new initiatives and opportunities for introducing the films to new audiences, both at home and abroad, continue to appear every year; and plenty of discoveries and surprises still remain for those exploring the field and its history. Over the past forty years, the pink film's output and diversity has been staggering, and many stones no doubt still remained unturned. And even if the industry and the films it releases don't adhere to the established model in areas such as production, exhibition, format and content, as a filmmaking stance and as a significant feature of the nation's cinematic landscape, its spirit looks sure to endure.

Footnotes

⁴⁴⁵ *Hotetoru* refers to the illegal practice of sending prostitutes to hotel rooms to provide a 'takeout' service similar to that found in soaplands.

⁴⁴⁶ Interview with Asakura. *24th Pia Film Festival* catalogue 2002. pg 85.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ Both titles were shot digitally in Korea, the former by Click Entertainment, and the latter by Playgirl TV. They were released in Japan respectively as *Kankoku-zuma: hirusagari no furin* and *Kankoku bishimai: futei no hitozuma*, though I've been unable to track down the original Korean titles, nor adequately transliterate the names of the directors from Japanese *katakana* to the roman alphabet. If one transliterates directly, the director of the first film is Li Pirurim, and of the second is Ki Unsoku.

⁴⁴⁹ Interview by author on Midnight Eye website.

⁴⁵⁰ I am indebted to Roland Domenig for this insight.

⁴⁵¹ Interview with Asakura Daisuke. *24th Pia Film Festival Catalogue* 2002. pg 82.

⁴⁵² The incident was reported in Japan's *Asahi Shinbun* and *Sankei Shinbun* newspapers on 23 August, 2007, and its details posted to the Kinejapan mailing list by Aaron Gerow.

⁴⁵³ Yûji Tajiri interviewed at Frankfurt's Nippon Connection, 22 April, 2006.

⁴⁵⁴ www.kuruma.org/mukai/profile.html

⁴⁵⁵ Interview by author on Midnight Eye. www.midnighteye.com/interviews/masao_adachi.shtml

Films Referenced in Text

As this book is about *pinku eiga* and Roman Porno, it is these films whose production and availability details are listed below, and not non-pink independent films such as those of ATG, AV, erotic videos, V-cinema productions, or other exploitation genres such as much of the output of the old Shintoho studio during the '50s or Toei's Pinky Violence films, except in the case where it has been judged that such information be considered central to the discussion and useful to the reader.

As should be clear from the text, the vast majority of these titles have received no Western release at all. Where they have, they are listed under their foreign release title, even if it bears no relation to the original Japanese. The translated title is also given. The films such as those made by the Four Devils or Seven Lucky Gods with separate director's titles will be listed under these titles, with the original title with which they were circulated to pink theatres given below this marked *Orig*. If they were released subsequently to non-pink theatres with a new title, this too will be listed separately under the heading *Gen*. Different video or DVD release titles will be listed *Vid*. And if re-released into pink theatres with new retitles, these will be marked *RR*.

In order to save confusion and unnecessarily add to the proliferation of unofficial names for these films, many of these translations are taken from Thomas and Yuko Mihara Weisser's exhaustive *Japanese Film Encyclopedia: The Sex Films*, which adequately conveys the sensationalist nature of the original titles. In the few cases where I feel I can improve on Weisser's translations, or if the film in question is not included in this first major book on the subject, I have given my own translations.

Key

Official English Release Title or English Translated Title (Japanese Title)

{Trans. Translated title, if English release title differs from Japanese.

Alt. Alternative foreign release title.

Gen. General or mainstream theatre re-release title.}

Title in Japanese characters

{Orig. Original theatrical release title to pink theatres

Vid. Japanese video or DVD re-release title, if different from original.

RR: Pink re-release title}

Cast: selected major players.

Year: of initial theatrical release. This section gives details of the company who produced the film and the company who distributed it theatrically in pink theatres, separated by a /. In many cases this is one and the same entity. Notable examples include Kokuei, which distributes its work through Shintoho. Video or DVD only releases are marked with a (V).

Format: colour / B/W / part colour / (+DV for digital video)

Length: in minutes (m.)

Availability: Unsubtitled Japanese DVD details are only given in the event of no other subtitled release existing.

Films Listed Alphabetically By Director

Masao ADACHI

Abortion (Datai)

墮胎

Cast: Mikio TERAJIMA, Nami KATSURA, Tatsuhiro OKA, Hiroko FUJI
1966, Wakamatsu Pro, B/W, 75m.

Birth Control Revolution

(*Hinin kakumei*)

避孕革命

Cast: Mikio TERAJIMA, Kozue KASHIMA, Atsushi YAMATOYA, Hachirô TOBITA, Hatsuo YAMAYA, Kôji WAKAMATSU, Shigeomi SATÔ
1967, Wakamatsu Pro, B/W, 76m.

Gushing Prayer: A 15-Year-Old Prostitute

(*Funshutsu kigan: 15-sai no baishunfu*)

噴出祈願 15歳の売春婦

Cast: Aki SASAKI, Hiroshi SAITÔ, Yûji AOKI, Susumu IWABUCHI, Michio AKIYAMA, Ken YOSHIZAWA, Kazuo KOMIZU
1971, Kokuei, part colour, 72m.

Availability: Hummingbird (Japan, no subtitles)

VHS

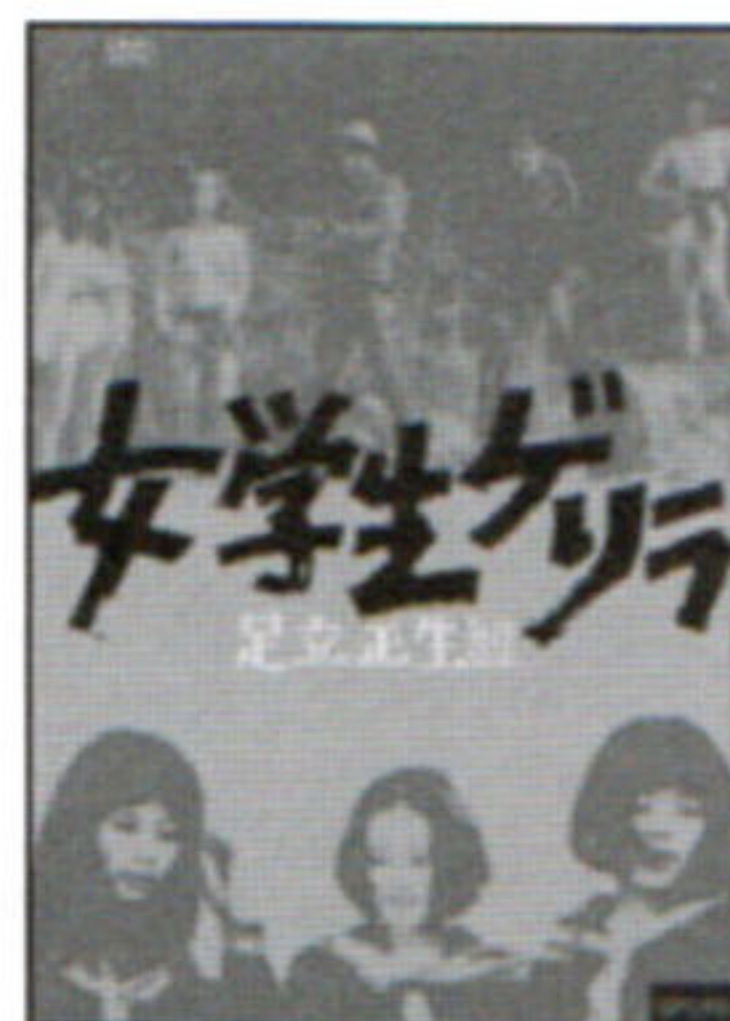
High School Girl Guerrilla (Jogakusei gerira)

女学生ゲリラ

Cast: Eri ASHIKAWA, Kenji FUKUMA, Sachiko ICHIJI

1969, Wakamatsu Pro, part colour, 73m.

Availability: Uplink (Japan, no subtitles)



Rebel Woman: Dream Hell

(*Hanjo: mugen jigoku*)

叛女・夢幻地獄

Cast: Michiko TANI, Teruko AMANO, Kaoru MIYA, Hiroshi IMAIZUMI, Atsushi YAMATOYA

1970, Wakamatsu Pro, part colour, 80m.

Red Army / PFLP Declaration of World

War (*Sekigun-PFLP: Sekai sensô sengen*)

赤軍-PFLP 世界戦争宣言

Cast: n/a

1971, Wakamatsu Pro, colour, 71m.

Note: Co-directed with Masao MATSUDA

Sex Play (Seiyûgi)

性遊戯

Cast: Ken YOSHIZAWA, Natsu NAKAJIMA, Michio AKIYAMA, Hatsuo YAMAYA, Kazuo KOMIZU

1969, Wakamatsu Pro, part colour, 71m.

Sex Zone (Sei-chitai: sekkusu zôn)

性地帯 セックスゾーン

Cast: Hatsuo YAMAYA, Rika MIZUSHIRO, Michiyo IGAWA, Rie SAKURAI, Yuri NAKAO
1968, Wakamatsu Pro, part colour, 72m.

Kyôko AIZOME

Continuation: Kyôko Aizome's G-Sensation

Ultimate Edition (Tsugu: Aizome Kyôko G no kaikan kyûkoku)

続・愛染恭子Gの快感 究極編

Cast: Kyôko AIZOME, Mayumi SAWAKI, Rina TAKAHASHI, Yôko SATOMI, Naohiro HIRAGAWA, Yasushi TAKEMOTO, Kaoru YAMASHINA
2002, Xces Film, colour, 60m.

Kyôko Aizome vs. Eri

Kikuchi Double G-Spot

(*Aizome Kyôko vs Kikuchi*

Eri daburu G supotto)

愛染恭子VS菊池えり

ダブルGスポット

Cast: Kyôko AIZOME, Eri KIKUCHI, Masayoshi NOGAMI, Kyôko KAZAMA
2003, Xces Film, colour, 60m.



Ryûji AKITSU

High School Girl: Thrill of the Chase
(*Jokôsei: ryôshoku*)

女高生猟色

Cast: Junko MIWA, Masami SAKAE, Kiyomi ITÔ
1984, Million Film, colour, 61m.

Nobuyoshi ARAKI

High School Girl Fake Diary

(*Jokôsei nise nikki*)

女高生偽日記

Cast: Rika ARAI, Yôko MORIMURA, Naomi HAGIO, Koshirô ASAMI, Yuki YOSHIZAWA
1981, Nikkatsu, colour, 64m.



Tarô ARAKI

Caravan Guy (Kyaraban yarô)

キャラバン野郎

Orig. *Abnormal Exposure: Exhibitionist*
(*Ijôsei roshutsu: misetagari*)

異常露出 見せたがり

Cast: Tarô ARAKI, Shôko KUDÔ, Yumika HAYASHI, Kyôko GODAI
1996, Taro Pro / Ôkura Eiga, colour, 60m.

Humoresque (Yûmoresuku)

ユーモレスク

Orig. *Erotic Husband and Wife: Suck on Me*
(*Kôshoku fûfu: susutte hoshii*)

好色夫婦 すずって欲しい

Cast: Hitomi YAMAZAKI, Shion SONO, Kiyomi ITÔ, Tarô ARAKI, Yûichi MINATO, Kanako KISHI, Kôju RAN, Shion SONO
1999, Taro Pro / Ôkura Eiga, colour, 59m.

Molester Assault Bus: Put Through

(*Chikan bôkô basu: shigoku*)

痴漢暴行バス しごく

Cast: Mai KAWANA, Tarô ARAKI, Kôichi IMAIZUMI

1998, Taro Pro / Ôkura Eiga, colour, 59m.

Keiko ARISUGAWA

Sex Sensation Full Throttle Woman

(*Seikan zenkai o-n-na*)

性感全開お・ん・な

Cast: unknown
1986, Million Film, colour, 81m.

Shu Lea CHEANG

I. K. U.

Cast: Ayumu TOKITÔ, Maria YUMENO, Yumeka SASAKI, Miho ARIGA, Myû ASÔ, Etsuyo TSUCHIDA, TSOUSIE
2000, Uplink, colour (+DV), 74m.
Availability: Uplink (Japan, English language/subtitles), Alive (Germany, German subtitles)



Oniroku DAN

Flesh Hell (Niku jigoku)

肉地獄

Cast: unknown
1971, Million Film, part colour, 74m.

Saburô ENDÔ

Apartment Wife: Unforgettable Night

(*Danchi-zuma: wasareranu yoru*)

団地妻 忘れ得ぬ夜

Cast: Junko MIYASHITA, Tatsuya HAMAGUCHI, Ryûichi MORI
1972, Nikkatsu, colour, 67m.

Lusty Ama: Stirred-Up Pot

(*Shikijô ama: midare tsubo*)

色情海女 乱れ壺

Cast: Natsuko YASHIRO, Kazuki DÔMOTO, Yasunori ISHIZU, Tokuko WATANABE
1976, Nikkatsu, colour, 72m.

Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

Toshirô ENOMOTO

Glitter (Gira-Gira)

キラキラ

Orig. *Blissful Super Spin: Countless Times in One Night*

(*Monzetsu dai-kaiten: hitoban ni nankai de mo*)

悶絶大回転 ひと晩に何回でも

Cast: Kazuki WADA, Kikujirô HONDA, Yukiko IZUMI

1997, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 60m.

Nikomihoppy

(*Nikomihoppi*)

ニコミホッピー

Orig. *Bliss: Gushing Lust*

(*Monzetsu: hotobashiru aiyouku*)

悶絶 ほとばしる愛欲

Cast: Mutsuo YOSHIOKA, Mayu ASADA, Kanae MIZUHARA, Shirô SHIMOMOTO, Lemon HANAZAWA, Kazuhiro SANO, Takeshi ITÔ
2006, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 64m.

Slow Motion

Orig. *Forbidden Affair: Adulterous Wife Legs Spread Wide Open*

(*Kinjirareta jôji: furin-zuma ômata-biragi*)

禁じられた情事 不倫妻大股びらき

Cast: Kazuhiro UEDA, Azumi YÛKI, Kanako KISHI, Yôta KAWASE
1996, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 64m.

Summer of Listening Carefully

(*Mimi o sumasu natsu*)

耳を澄ますなつ

Orig. *Molester Train: Touch and Surprise*
(*Chikan densha: sawatte bikkari*)

痴漢電車 さわってビックリ!

Vid. *Express Molester Train: Dirty Fingertips*

(*Kaisoku chikan densha: iyarashii yubisaki*)

快速痴漢電車 いやらしい指先

Cast: Yôta KAWASE, Mayu ASADA, Hotaru HAZUKI, Kazuhiro SANO, Shûetsu TÔKAICHI, Takahiko KOBAYASHI
2001, Shintoho, colour, 62m.

Withered Flowers

Orig. *Comforting Angel: White Robed Mascot*
(*Oshaburi tenshi: byakui masokotto*)

おしゃぶり天使 白衣のマスコット

Cast: Yôta KAWASE, Yuki YOKOHAMA, Chinami HAYASHIDA, Mariko NAKA, Yôko CHÔSOKABE, Takeshi ITÔ
2000, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 60m.

Katsuhiko FUJII

International Flight Stewardess: Sensual Aviation

(*Kokusai-sen suchûwâdesu: kannô hikô*)

国際線スチュワーデス 官能飛行

Cast: Kumi TAGUCHI, Yuri YAMASHINA, Nana ASADA, Yôko AZUSA, Shôhei YAMAMOTO, Hiroshi GOJÔ, Toshihiko ODA
1976, Nikkatsu, colour, 69m.

Lady Chatterley in Tokyo

(*Tokyo chatarê fujin*)

Alt. *Tokyo Lady Chatterley*

東京チャタレー夫人

Cast: Izumi SHIMA, Hiromi MAIE, Kenji SHIYA, Yôko AZUSA, Teruho MATSUNAGA, Naomi OKA
1977, Nikkatsu, colour, 90m.

Office Lady Diary: Scent of a She-Cat

(*OL nikki: mesuneko no nioi*)

OL日記 牝猫の匂い

Cast: Rie NAKAGAWA, Yuri YAMASHINA, Keiko AIKAWA, Akemi YAMAGUCHI
1972, Nikkatsu, colour, 69m.

Oniroku Dan: Catholic Nun Rope Hell

(*Dan Oniroku: shûdôjo nawa jigoku*)

団鬼六 修道女縄地獄

Cast: Mika TAKAKURA, Asami OGAWA, Hiromi YAMAGUCHI
1984, Nikkatsu, colour, 69m.

Tokyo Emmanuelle: Private Instruction

(*Tôkyô emenueru fujin: kojîn kyôju*)

東京エマニエル夫人 個人教授

Cast: Kumi TAGUCHI, Midori ÔTANI, Madoka TAKAGI, Sôichirô MAENO
1975, Nikkatsu, colour, 68m.

Toshiya FUJITA

August Is the Smell of Eros

(*Hachigatsu wa erosu no nioi*)

八月はエロスの匂い

Cast: Maki KAWAMURA, Yûko KATAGIRI, Takao NAGAI
1972, Nikkatsu, colour, 73m.

Dangerous Liaisons

(*Kiken na kankei*)

危険な関係

Cast: Masayo UTSUNOMIYA, Yôichi MIURA, Yûko KATAGIRI, Yuki NOHIRA, Akemi NEGISHI
1978, Nikkatsu, colour, 97m.

Double Bed

(*Daburu beddo*)

ダブルベッド

Cast: Naoko ÔTANI, Eri ISHIDA, Akira EMOTO, Ittoku KISHIBE, Hitomi TAKAHASHI
1983, Nikkatsu, colour, 102m.
Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

Sweet Smell of Eros
(*Erosu wa amaki kaori*)
エロスは甘き香り
Cast: Hiroko ISAYAMA, Kaori MOMOI, Maki KAWAMURA, Hatsuo YAMAYA, Hiroshi GOJÔ, Hajime TANIMOTO, Yoshie KITSUDA
1973, Nikkatsu, colour, 75m.

Wet Sand of August
(*Hachigatsu no nureta suna*)
八月の濡れた砂
Cast: Takenori MURANO, Masasuke HIROSE, Teresa NODA, Midori FUJITA, Hatsuo YAMAYA
1971, Nikkatsu, colour, 91m.
Availability: Nikkatsu (Japan, no subtitles)

Atsushi FUJIURA

Lusty Ama: Loincloth Festival
(*Shikijô ama: fundoshi matsuri*)
色情海女 ふんどし祭り
Cast: Eri ANZAI, Kazuyo EZAKI, Maki KAWAMURA, Hiroko FUJI
1981, Nikkatsu, colour, 60m.

Marked Ama: Stirred-Up Shell
(*Kuikomi ama: midare kai*)
くいこみ海女 乱れ貝
Cast: Ryôko WATANABE, Hiroko FUJI, Madoka MIZUKI, Reiko MATSUBARA, Nami MATSUKAWA, Maiko KAZAMA
1982, Nikkatsu, colour, 67m.
Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

Mighty Ama: Tightly-Closed Shell
(*Zetsurin ama: shimari kai*)
絶倫海女しまり貝
Cast: Megumi KIYOSATO, Kumiko ITÔ, Kiriko SHIMIZU
1985, Nikkatsu, colour, 69m.

Night-Crawling Ama
(*Yobai ama*)
夜這い海女
Cast: Yôko AZUSA, Aoi NAKAJIMA, Naomi OKA, Reika MAKI, Naomi TANI
1977, Nikkatsu, colour, 69m.

Akira FUKAMACHI

Married Woman, OL, Beautiful Girl Lineage: Blissful Apartment
(*Hitozuma OL bishôjo-kei: monzetsu apâto*)
人妻・OL・美少女系 悶絶アパート
Cast: Seiji NAKAMITSU, Lemon HANAZAWA, Chinami HAYASHIDA
2004, Shintoho, colour, 60m.

Molester Train: Flagrant Mischief Maker
(*Chikan densha: itazura genkô-han*)
痴漢電車 いたずら現行犯
RR. *Molester Train: Flagrant Groper*
(*Chikan densha: osawari genkô-han*)
痴漢電車 おさわり現行犯
Cast: Kozue AOKI, Kazu ITSUKI, Yumika HAYASHI, Chinami HAYASHIDA
1994, Shintoho, colour, 54m.



New Widow's Lodgings: Open Inside and Out
(*Shin mibôjin geshuku: ura mo omote mo aitemasu*)
新・未亡人下宿 裏も表もあいてます
Cast: Chiemi AKIMOTO, Kyôko HASHIMOTO, Yutaka IKEJIMA
1988, Shintoho, colour, 61m.

Pervert in the Attic: Peeping Lewd Beast
(*Tenjô-ura no chikan: injû nozoki-ma*)
天井裏の痴漢 淫獣覗き魔
Vid. *Lewd Beast: Peeper in the Attic*
(*Injû: tenjô-ura no nozoki-ma*)
淫獣 天井裏の覗き魔
Cast: Yukiko KAWASE, Yôko SATOMI, Seiji NAKAMITSU, Kanae MIZUHARA, Hiroyuki KAWASAKI
2003, Shintoho, colour, 58m.
Availability: Interfilm (Japan, no subtitles)

Seiichi FUKUDA

Boneless (Hone-nuki)
骨ぬき
Cast: Kaoru MIYA, Mari NAGISA, Noriko CHIGETSU, Masao SHIRAKAWA, Hiroshi IZUMIDA
1967, Chûdô Eiga / Roppô Eiga, part colour, 72m.
Availability: Something Weird (US, English subtitles) VHS
Note: The film is listed on the JMDB as part colour, though the Something Weird video transfer is B/W. The video includes a sequence in faded colour as its trailer.

Madame O (Zoku akutokui: joi-hen)
Trans. *Continuation: Vice Doctor: Female Vice Edition*
続悪徳医 女医篇
Cast: Michiko SAKYÔ, Akihiko KANBARA, Naomi TANI, Michiko AOYAMA, Yûichi MINATO
1967, Nihon Cinema, part colour, 76m.
Availability: Synapse (US, English subtitles)

Yoshiho FUKUOKA

Japa-yuki Report: Torn Emotions
(*Japayuki repôto: retsujô*)
ジャパゆきレポート 裂情
Cast: Juri KATAOKA, Shirô SHIMOMOTO, Kaoru KISHIMOTO, Yû TOKUI
1988, Film City / Xces Film, colour, 61m.

Gaira

See Kazuo KOMIZU

Kyôko GODAI

The Gays in Wonderland
See listing under Kiyomi ITÔ

Daisuke GOTÔ

Bed Partner (Beddo pâtona)
ベッド・パートナー BED PARTNER
Cast: Kyôko HIROTA, Yôko TAKAGI, Tarô MOCHIZUKI
1988, Nikkatsu, colour, 72m.

A Cow At Daybreak (Yoake no ushi)
夜明けの牛
Orig. *Molester Father-in-Law, The Son's Bride and...* (*Chikan gifu: musuko no yome to...*)
痴漢義父 息子の嫁と・・・
Vid. *Rural Erotic Story: Milking – Cowshed of Immorality* – (*Denen kannô roman: chichishibori – haitoku no gyûsha*)
田園官能ロマン 乳搾り ～背徳の牛舎～
Cast: Hôryû NAKAMURA, Ryôko ASAGI, Yumeka SASAKI, Seiji NAKAMITSU
2003, Shintoho, colour, 59m.
Availability: Ken Media (Japan, no subtitles)

Married Couple Swap Night: My Wife and Your Husband (Fûfu kôkan zenyâ: watashi no tsuma to anata no okusan)
夫婦交換前夜 私の妻とあなたの奥さん
Cast: Kyôko NATSUME, Chinami HAYASHIDA, Kikujirô HONDA
2004, Shintoho, colour, 59m.

Keiko HAMA

College Girl Secret Floor Exercise
(*Joshi gakusei maruhi yuka undo*)
女子学生 (秘) 床運動
Cast: Maiko KAZAMA, Seru RANDÔ, Keiko HAMA, Jun KITAMURA
1980, Nihon Cinema / Shintoho, colour, 60m.

Molester Travel Lodge Sleeping Huddled Together (Chikan minshuku zakone)
痴漢民宿ごこ寝
Cast: Keiko HAMA, Masami SAKAE, Mimi SAWAKI, Rumi SASAMOTO
1980, Nihon Cinema / Shintoho, colour, 60m.

Sachi HAMANO

Blazing Men (Honoo no otoko-tachi)
炎の男たち
Cast: Takashi TSUGAWA
1990, ENK, colour, 60m.

Greedy Housewives (Yaritai hitozuma)
やりたい人妻たち
Cast: Yuki, Reiko KAGAMI, Kyôko KAZAMA, Seiji NAKAMITSU, Tôshi YANAGI, Naohiro HIRAGAWA
2003, Tantansha / Shintoho, colour, 58m.
(directed as Chise MATOBA)

Greedy Housewives 2: Take Me to Heaven Technique (Yaritai hitozuma 2: shôten tekunikku)
やりたい人妻たち2 昇天テクニック
Cast: Yukari SAKURADA, Reiko KAGAMI, Motoko SASAKI, Seiji NAKAMITSU, Naohiro HIRAGAWA
2003, Tantansha / Shintoho, colour, 59m.
(directed as Chise MATOBA)

17-Year-Old Free Love Tribe (Jûnana-sai sukusuki-zoku)
十七才すきすき族
Cast: unknown
1970, Million Film, part colour, 70m.

Woman's Body Delicacy (Nyotai chinmi)
女体珍味
Cast: unknown
1972, Million Film, part colour, 67m.

Yasuharu HASEBE

Assault! Jack the Ripper (Bôkô! kirisaki Jack)
暴行切り裂きジャック



Cast: Tamaki KATSURA,
Yutaka HAYASHI,
Yuri YAMASHINA,
Natsuko YASHIRO,
Rei OKAMOTO,
Naomi OKA, Runa
TAKAMURA
1976, Nikkatsu, colour,
71m.
Availability: Geneon
(Japan, no subtitles)

*Attack!!
(Osou!!)*
襲う！！

Cast: Asami OGAWA,
Yôko AZUSA, Aoi
NAKAJIMA, Yuri RISA
1978, Nikkatsu, colour,
72m.
Availability: Geneon
(Japan, no subtitles)



*Delinquent Girl Cop: Dirty Mary
(Sukeban deka: dâti mari)*

すげばん刑事 ダーティ・マリー
Cast: Hitomi KOZUE, Nagatoshi SAKAMOTO,
Junko MIYASHITA, Yuri YAMASHINA, Keiko
AIKAWA, Sumiko MINAMI, Ai YOSHINO
1974, Nikkatsu, colour, 80m.

*Outrage!
(Aburu!)*

暴る！
Cast: Natsuko YASHIRO, Ryôko AOYAMA, Naomi
OKA, Kenji IMAI, Hisashi KATÔ
1978, Nikkatsu, colour, 69m.

*Rape!
(Okasu!)*

犯す
Cast: Natsuko YASHIRO, Keizô KANIE, Rei
OKAMOTO, Akira TAKAHASHI, Naomi TANI,
Akemi NIJÔ, Yuri YAMASHINA
1976, Nikkatsu, colour, 71m.

*Rape: The 13th Hour
(Reipu 25-ji: bôkan)*
レイプ25時 暴姦

Cast: Yuri YAMASHINA, Yûdai ISHIYAMA,
Akira TAKAHASHI, Natsuko YASHIRO, Tamaki
KATSURA, Naomi OKA, Rei OKAMOTO
1977, Nikkatsu, colour, 73m.

*Secret Honeymoon Assault Train
(Maruhi hanemûn bôkô ressha)*
(秘) ハネムーン 暴行列車

Cast: Natsuko YASHIRO, Noriaki ABE, Hisashi
KATÔ, Tokuko WATANABE, Jun TODOKI
1977, Nikkatsu, colour, 72m.

*Warring States Rock: Gale-Force Women
(Zengoku rokku: shippû no onna-tachi)*
戦国ロック 疾風の女たち

Cast: Mari TANAKA, Keiko TSUZUKI, Yuri
YAMASHINA, Setsuko ÔYAMA, Sayori SHIMA,
Keiko AIKAWA, Genjirô ARATO
1972, Nikkatsu, colour, 80m.

Takuaki HASHIGUCHI

*Mansion of the Senses: Wife's Ascension
(Kannô no yakata: hitozuma shôten)*

官能の館 人妻昇天
Cast: Hotaru HAZUKI, Ayu MIZUNO, Kyôko
KAZAMA, Azusa SAKAI, Kikujirô HONDA
2004, Shintocho, colour, 59m.

The Slit-Mouth Woman (Kuchisake)
口裂け

Orig. *Hospital Ward of the Senses: Wet Red Lips
(Kannô byôtô: nureta akai kuchibiru)*
官能病棟 濡れた赤い唇
Cast: Mayu ASADA, Minami AOYAMA, Lemon
HANAZAWA, Kikujirô HONDA, Takeshi ITÔ,
Hotaru HAZUKI
2005, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 63m.
Availability: Salvation (UK, English subtitles)

Isao HAYASHI

Castle Orgies (Irogoyomi ôoku hiwa)

Trans. *Sensual History:
Shogun's Harem Secret
Story*
色暦大奥秘話

Cast: Setsuko OGAWA,
Yôichi NISHIKAWA,
Yasuko MATSUI,
Megumi FUJI, Midori
MORI, Kôju RAN
1971, Nikkatsu, colour,
67m.

Availability: Tai Seng
(Hong Kong, English
subtitles)



Yôichi HIGASHI

*Love Letter
(Rabu retâ)*

ラブレター

Cast: Keiko SEKINE, Katsuo NAKAMURA, Mariko
KAGA
1981, Nikkatsu, colour, 83m.

Takumei HIGUCHI

*Eighteen Years Old
(Jûhassai)*

十八歳

Cast: Ôno MOTO, Takahiko KOBAYASHI, Kiyomi
ITÔ, Natsuhiko UEDA, Ryûji YAMAMOTO
1996, ENK, colour, 60m.

Ryûichi HIROKI

*Bugging Mania: Friday Girl
(Tôchô mania: friday no onna)*

盗聴マニア FRIDAYの女

Cast: Miki HIGUCHI, Emi NITTA, Yumi IWASHITA,
Masahiko ITÔ
1986, Yû Pro / Nikkatsu, colour, 62m.

*Our Generation
(Bokura no jidai)*

ぼくらの時代

Cast: Tatsuya NAGATOMO, Kenji TAKEUCHI
1983, Yû Pro / ENK, colour, unknown

Our Moment

(*Bokura no shunkan*)

ぼくらの瞬間

Cast: unknown

1985, Yû Pro / ENK, colour, unknown

Our Season

(*Bokura no kisetsu*)

ぼくらの季節

Cast: Tôru NAKANE, Ren ÔSUGI, Yasushi SATÔ,
Yutaka IKEJIMA, Mayumi HOSHINO

1983, Yû Pro / ENK, colour, unknown

Pervert and Skirt

(*Chikan to sukâto*)

痴漢とスカート

Cast: Arisa SHINDÔ, Yôko OKI, Yôko TASHIRO,
Yutaka IKEJIMA, Masahiko ITÔ, Ren ÔSUGI

1984, Yû Pro / Nikkatsu, colour, 60m.

The Sacrifice

(*Ze ikenie*)

ザ・生贄

Cast: Fujiko SUETSUGU, Shikô SHIMA, Misa
KAMIJÛ

1986, Yû Pro / Nikkatsu, colour, 65m.

(directed as Gô IJÛIN)

The Sexual Abuse

(*Ze sekkan*)

ザ・折檻

Cast: Fujiko SUETSUGU, Kurara, Anna SHIMAZU,
Hiromi SAOTOME, Shikô SHIMA

1985, Yû Pro / Nikkatsu, colour, 66m.
(directed as Gô IJÛIN)

Sexual Abuse! Exposed Woman

(*Seigyaku! onna o abaku*)

Alt. *Catch the Woman Out*

性虐！女を暴く

Cast: Yuka ASAGIRI, Yôko AZUSA, Yû
TACHIBANA, Ren ÔSUGI

1982, Million Film, colour, 60m.

THE SM

Cast: Hiromi SAOTOME, Kyôko NAKAMURA,
Ami ISHIKAWA

1984, Million Film, colour, 75m.

(directed as Gô IJÛIN)

Teacher, Don't Turn Me On

(*Sensei, watashi no karada ni hi o tsukenaide*)

先生、私の体に火をつけないで

Cast: Chie HIGASHI, Arisa SHINDÔ, Yukari

TAKESHITA, Tôru NAKANE, Ren ÔSUGI

1984, Yû Pro / Nikkatsu, colour, 60m.

Teiichi HORI

Hanging in the Air (Chûburarin)

宙ぶらりん

Orig. *Sex Deliveryman: Send a Woman*

(*SEX haitatsujin onna todokemasu*)

SEX配達人 おんな届けます

Vid. *Bento Shop Wife. Another Dish. What Would
I Like? (Bentô-ya no hitozuma. mô ippin. watashi
wa ikaga desuka?)*

弁当屋の人妻 もう一品、私はいかがで
すか？

Cast: Katsu ONDA, Yuki, Haruhisa KATÔ, Nikki
SASAKI, Mame YAMADA

2003, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 64m.

Availability: Interfilm (Japan, no subtitles)

Tan IIDA

Portrait of Passion

(*Hichô: onna ukiyo sôshi*)

Trans. *Secret Notebook: Female Storybook of the Floating World*

秘帳 女浮世草紙

Cast: Ryôji HAYAMA, Hiroshi NAWA, Toshie NIHONYANAGI, Genshû HANAYAGI, Tokiko MITA
1968, Aoyama Pro / Nikkatsu, colour, 80m.

Tokyo Bath Harem

(*Onna ukiyo buro*)

Trans. *Female Bathhouse of the Floating World*
女浮世風呂

Cast: Ryôji HAYAMA, Jirô OKAZAKI, Toshie NIHONYANAGI, Takako UCHIDA, Miki HAYASHI
1968, Aoyama Pro / Nikkatsu, colour, 87m.

Masuo IKEDA

Dedicated to the Aegean Sea (*Êgu-kai ni sasagu*)

Orig. *Dedicato al mare Egeo*

エーゲ海に捧ぐ

Cast: Claudio Aliotti, Stefania Casini, Maria D'Alessandro, Olga Karlatos, Stefano Rolla, Ilona Staller
1979, Toho Towa, colour, 109m.



Roma dalla finestra

(*Mado kara rôma ga mieru*)

Trans. *Rome from the Window*

窓からローマが見える

Cast: Kimiko NAKAYAMA, Claudio Cassinelli, Delia Boccardo
1982, Fuji Eiga, colour, 104m.
Availability: Culture Publishers (Japan, no subtitles)

Toshiharu IKEDA

Angel Guts: Red Porno

(*Tenshi no harawata: akai inga*)

天使のはらわた 赤い淫画

Cast: Jun IZUMI, Masahiko ABE, Kyôko ITÔ, Miiko SAWAKI, Yôko KURITA, Osamu TSURUOKA, Yuri YAMASHINA
1981, Nikkatsu, colour, 67m.

Availability: Artsmagic (US, English subtitles)

One Summer's Experience: Blue Coral Reef

(*Hitonatsu no taiken: aoi sangoshô*)

ひと夏の体験 青い珊瑚礁

Cast: Mayumi TERASHIMA, Asako KURAYOSHI, Yuka ASAGIRI, Mitsuo NAMIHEI, Izumi SHIMA
1981, Nikkatsu, colour, 68m.

Sex Hunter

(*Sekkusu hantâ: sei karyûdo*)

セックスハンター 性狩人

Cast: Erina MIYAI, Ayako ÔTA, Nobuyuki INOUE, Teruo MATSUYAMA, Seru RANDÔ
1980, Nikkatsu, colour, 67m.

Sukeban Mafia: Flesh Punishment Lynching

(*Sukeban mafia: nikukei rinchi*)

スケバンマフィア 肉刑 リンチ

Cast: Asako KURAYOSHI, Yûko ÔSAKI, Tokuko WATANABE, Eri KANUMA, Yukie ISHII
1980, Nikkatsu, colour, 69m.

Yutaka IKEJIMA

Adulterous Wife's Dirty Afternoon

(*Furin-zuma no midara na gogo*)

不倫妻の淫らな午後

Cast: Motoko SASAKI, Noa TSUKISHIMA, Rio MOCHIZUKI, Kikujirô HONDA
2003, OP Eiga, colour, 60m.

Family Gets Rude Chapter 1: Perverts' Fun

(*Inran naru ichizoku dai ichi-shô: chijin-tachi no tawamure*)

淫乱なる一族 第一章 痴人たちの戯れ

Vid. *Family Gets Rude: Corrupted Celebrity Wife*

(*Inran naru ichizoku: haitoku serebu-tsuma*)

淫乱なる一族 背徳セレブ妻

Cast: Naohiro HIRAGAWA, Akane YAZAKI, Azusa SAKAI, Reiko YAMAGUCHI, Lemon HANAZAWA
2004, Shintocho, colour, 63m.

Availability: Interfilm (Japan, no subtitles)

Family Gets Rude Chapter 2: Unequalled Limits

(*Inran naru ichizoku dai ni-shô: zetsurin no hate ni*)

淫乱なる一族第二章 絶倫の果てに

Cast: Naohiro HIRAGAWA, Reiko YAMAGUCHI, Akane YAZAKI, Azusa SAKAI, Lemon HANAZAWA, Kikujirô HONDA, Kaoru AKITSU
2004, Shintocho, colour, 60m.

Hostess Madness: Unparched Nectar

(*Hosuto kurui: kawakanai mitsu-jiru*)

ホスト狂い 渴かない蜜汁

Cast: Yuria HIDAKA, Yûki MIKAMI, Osamu TANPOPO, Takahiro NOMURA, Yasushi TAKEMOTO, Kikujirô HONDA
2006, OP Eiga, colour, 60m.

Love Me Danger (*Abanaku ai shite*)

危なく愛して LOVE

ME DANGER

Cast: Makoto SUGIMOTO, Kimitake HIRAOKA, Shirô NOGUCHI
1996, ENK, colour, 60m.

The Masturbating Lesbians

(*Za ONANIE Resu*)

ザ・ONANIE レズ

Cast: Kyôko HASHIMOTO
1991, Xces Film, colour, 60m.

Men Who Love

(*Ai suru otoko-tachi*)

恋する男たち

Cast: Masaya SAKURAI, Hiroshi TAKEMOTO, Shiori KAWAMURA
2002, OP Eiga, colour, 61m.

Shinji IMAOKA

Demeking

(*Demekingu*)

デメキング

Orig. *Molester Train: Benten's Butt*

(*Chikan Densha: Benten no o-shiri*)

痴漢電車 弁天のお尻

Cast: Takuji SUZUKI, Yôko CHÔSOKABE, Nao KOJIMA, Yumeka SASAKI, Takeshi ITÔ, Yôta KAWASE, Tomohiro OKADA
1998, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 80m.
Availability: Broadway (Japan, no subtitles)

Despite All That

(*Soredemo*)

それでも。

Orig. *Sopping Wet Married Teacher: Doing It in Uniform* (*Gusho-nure hitazuma kyôshi: seifuku de idaite*)

ぐしょぬれ人妻教師 一制服で抱いて一

Cast: Mitsuyo SUWA, Takeshi ITÔ, Atsuko SUZUKI, Mikio SATÔ

1999, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 62m.

Availability: Salvation (UK, English subtitles)

Falling in Love

(*Ai suru*)

恋する

Orig. *Wife Stirred-Up with Sexual Desire* (*Aiyoku midare-zuma*)

愛欲みだれ妻

Cast: Mitsuyo SUWA, Yôji TANAKA, Ken NAGAI, Juri ASAOKA

1999, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 63m.

Availability: Broadway (Japan, no subtitles)

Frog Song

(*Kaeru no uta*)

かえるのうた

Orig. *Paid Companionship Story: Girls Who Want to Do It* (*Enjo kôsai monogatari: shitagaru onna-tachi*)

援助交際物語 したがるオンナたち

Cast: Konatsu, Rinako HIRASAWA, Mutsuo YOSHIOKA, Takeshi ITÔ, Yôta KAWASE

2005, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 65m.

Availability: Salvation (UK, English subtitles)

Lunch Box

(*Obentô*)

お弁当

Orig. *Mature Woman: Rutting Ball-Play*

(*Jukujô: hatsujô tamashaburi*)

熟女・発情 タマしゃぶり

Gen. *Bowling Ball*

(*Tamamono*)

たまもの

Cast: Yumika HAYASHI, Mutsuo YOSHIOKA, Lemon HANAZAWA, Takeshi ITÔ, Kiyomi ITÔ, Yôta KAWASE

2004, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 65m.

Availability: Salvation (UK, English subtitles)

Uncle's Paradise (*Ojisan tengoku*)

おじさん天国

Orig. *Mighty Extreme Woman*

(*Zetsujin zetsujo*)

絶倫絶女

Cast: Shirô SHIMOMOTO, Mutsuo YOSHIOKA, Minami AOYAMA, Takeshi ITÔ

2006, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 64m.

Availability: Salvation (UK, English subtitles)

Waiting for the Comet (*Suisei-machi*)

彗星まち

Orig. *Sex Party of Beasts: Come Together* (*Kemono-tachi no seien: ikutoki isshe*)

獣たちの性宴 イクときいっしょ

Cast: Sôjirô ARAI, Aiko NAKA, Takeshi ITÔ, Setsuko ABE

1995, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 63m.

Availability: Uplink (Japan, no subtitles)



Takashi ISHII

Angel Guts: Red Lightning
(*Tenshi no harawata: akai senkô*)

天使のはらわた 赤い閃光
Cast: Maiko KAWAKAMI, Noriko HAYAMI,
Shingo TSURUMI
1994, Argo Pictures, colour, 87m.

Angel Guts: Red Vertigo
(*Tenshi no harawata: akai memai*)

天使のはらわた 赤い眩暈
Cast: Mayako KATSURAGI, Naoto TAKENAKA,
Jun IZUMI, Hirofumi KOBAYASHI, Yûho
YAMAUCHI
1988, Nikkatsu, colour, 74m.
Availability: Artsmagic (US, English subtitles)

Flower and Snake
(*Hana to hebi*)

花と蛇
Cast: Aya SUGIMOTO, Renji ISHIBASHI,
Hironobu NOMURA, Kenichi ENDÔ, Misaki
2004, Toei Video, colour, 115m.
Availability: Media Blasters (US, English
subtitles)

Flower and Snake 2: Paris / Shizuko
(*Hana to hebi: pari / shizuko*)

花と蛇2 パリ / 静子
Cast: Aya SUGIMOTO, Joe SHISHIDO, Kenichi
ENDÔ, Fujiko, Mieko ARAI
2005, Toei Video, colour, 113m.
Availability: Media Blasters (US, English
subtitles)

Kiyomi ITÔ

The Gays in Wonderland
(*Fushigi no kuni no gei-tachi*)

不思議の国のゲイたち
Trans. *The Mysterious Land of Gays*
Pt 1. *Echika*
– dir. Kiyomi ITÔ
エチカ
Pt 2. *Nursing at Home*
(*Zaitaku Kaigo*)
– dir. Kyôko GODAI
在宅介護
Pt 3. *The Beast Who Screamed 'Love' in the
Middle of a Movie*



(*Eiga no chûshin de ai o sakenda kedamono*)
– dir. Keiko SORBONNE
映画の中心でアイを叫んだだけのもの
Cast: Kazu ITSUKI, Shintarô
TANAKA, Kozue AOKI,
Takao NAKANO, Shirô
NOGUCHI, Masayoshi
NOGAMI, Tarô ARAKI
1997, ENK, colour, 58m.
Availability: Cam Video
(Japan, no subtitles) VHS

Hajime IZU

Woman (Onna)

おんな
Cast: Yûko KASHIWAGI, Shôjirô OGASAWARA,
Michiko HOSHI
1964, Kokuei, B/W, 86m.

Seiji IZUMI

New Bride: Mixed Up Figure
(*Niizuma: midare sugata*)

新妻・乱れ姿
Cast: Mako AOKI, Jun KOSUGI, Chiyako MISUZU,
Kenji AOKI
1974, Pro Taka, colour, 67m.
Availability: Ace Deuce (Japan, no subtitles)

Red Cave
(*Akai kôdô*)

赤い空洞
Cast: unknown
1972, Pro Taka, unknown, unknown

*Sex Document: Serial Rapists (Sekksu semi
dokyumento: renzoku fujo bôkô-ma)*

セックスセミドキュメント 連続婦女暴行魔
Cast: Rumi TAMA,
Yûichi MINATO,
Kazumi SAWA,
Miki OGAWA,
Keiko TAKAHASHI,
Hiroko FUJI, Ichirô
YOSHIOKA, Jirô
SAGAWA
1975, Million Film,
colour, 62m.
Availability:
Ace Deuce
(Japan, no subtitles)



Yokohama Cheyenne: Woman Swamp Zone
(*Yokohama shaian: onna no shicchi-tai*)

横浜シャイアン 女の湿地帯
Cast: Midori SUGA, Ai MISUZU, Masayoshi
NOGAMI, Ichirô YOSHIOKA
1974, Pro Taka / Million Film, colour, 66m.
Availability: Ace Deuce (Japan, no subtitles)

Kazuyuki IZUTSU

Assault Demon Pearl Torture
(*Bôkô-ma shinju-zeme*)

暴行魔真珠責め



(*Yuke yuke maito gai: seishun monmon*)
行く行くマイトガイ

性春の悶々
Cast: Kan MIKAMI,
Moeko EZAWA, Yûko
AKANE, Rumiko
TACHIBANA
1975/77, Shinei
Kurabu / Million
Film, colour, 66m.
Availability: Ace
Deuce (Japan, no
subtitles)

Cast: Takuma IKEUCHI,
Yûichi MINATO, Rei
OKAMOTO, Hibari
NAKAHARA
1979, Shintocho,
colour, 61m.
Availability: Video
Maker (Japan, no
subtitles)

*Go Go Might Guy:
The Anguish of Sexual
Awakening*



Akio JISSÔJI

The Prosperity of Vice (Akutoku no sakae)
悪徳の栄え

Cast: Sei Ran RI, Renji ISHIBASHI
1988, Nikkatsu (Ropponica), colour, 96m.
Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

Gorô KADONO

Ghost Story: Phantom Ama (Kaidan ama yûrei)
怪談海女幽霊

Cast: Jûsaborô AKECHI, Masayo BANRI, Kyôko
ÔGIMACHI, Katsuko WAKASUGI, Kôji KOKONOE
1960, Shintocho, B/W, 56m.

KAJINO

Sabaku

Trans. *Bound in Chains*
鎖縛 — S A B A K U —
Cast: Kazuhiro SANO,
Kazuhiro TACHIZAWA,
Takatoshi TONEGAWA,
Mikio SATÔ, Kiyomi ITÔ
2000, ENK, colour, 60m.
Availability: Bryce (Japan,
no subtitles)



Yoshitaka KAMATA

No Woman No Cry (Nô ûman no kurai)
ノーウーマン★ノークライ

Orig. *Dangerous Affair: Drool of the Beast*
(*Abunai jôji: kedamono no shitatari*)

あぶない情事 獣のしたたり

Vid. *Sighs of a Wicked Woman*

(*Akajo no sasayaki*)

悪女のささやき

Cast: Takeshi ITÔ, Harumi KAJIMA, Mayuko
SASAKI, Daisuke IJIMA, Yûji SAWAYAMA
1998, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 65m.

Availability: Airfield (Japan, no subtitles) VHS

Sara

サラ

Orig. *Young Wife: The Fragrance of Adultery*
(*Waka-zuma: furin no kaori*)

若妻 不倫の香り

Cast: Yôta KAWASE, Yumeka SASAKI, Shôko
KUDÔ, Takeshi ITÔ
1998, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 63m.

Kôji KAMOTA

Give Me More Love (Motto motto ai)

もっともっと愛

Cast: Rokurô TAKI, Kenji SAWA, Tomorrowo
TAGUCHI
1984, ENK, colour, 60m.

Katsuji KANAZAWA

The Love Game Isn't Over
(*Rabu gômu wa owaranai*)

ラブ・ゲームは終わらない

Cast: Yukari TAKEDA, Atsushi NARASAKA, Mako
TAKIGAWA, Kôichi UEDA, Akira TAKAHASHI
1988, Nikkatsu, colour, 74m.

Shûsuke KANEKO

Kôichirô Uno's Wet Strike



(Uno Kôichirô no nurete utsu)
宇能鴻一郎の濡れて打つ
Cast: Natsuko YAMAMOTO, Arisa HAYASHI, Jôji SAWADA, Rika ISHII
1984, Nikkatsu, colour, 55m.
Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

Shûji KATAOKA

Subway Serial Rape
(Chikatetsu renzoku reipu)
地下鉄連続レイプ

Cast: Mami FUJIMURA, Akira OKAMURA, Eri ISHIZAKA, Hiromi SAOTOME, Shirô SHIMOMOTO, Ren ÔSUGI
1985, Shishi Pro / Nikkatsu, colour, 62m.

Subway Serial Rape: Lover Hunting
(Chikatetsu renzoku reipu: aijin-gari)
地下鉄連続レイプ 愛人狩り
Cast: Kanako KISHI, Megumi TAKAHASHI, Sayaka HITOMI, Sayaka KIMURA, Shirô SHIMOMOTO, Yukijirô HOTARU, Ren ÔSUGI
1988, Shishi Pro / Nikkatsu, colour, 61m.

Subway Serial Rape: OL Hunting
(Chikatetsu renzoku reipu: OL-gari)
地下鉄連続レイプ OL狩り
Cast: Saya HÔJÔ, Chiemi AKIMOTO, Kazumi NATSUKI, Hiromi SAOTOME
1986, Shishi Pro / Nikkatsu, colour, 60m.

Subway Serial Rape: Uniform Hunting
(Chikatetsu renzoku reipu: seifuku-gari)
地下鉄連続レイプ 制服狩り
Cast: Mai HAYAMI, Rino SHIMAZAKI, Ren ÔSUGI, Kiwako SAWAKI
1987, Shishi Pro / Nikkatsu, colour, 60m.

Akira KATÔ

Droppar Av Honung
(Mitsu no shitatari)
Trans. Drops of Honey
密のしたたり
Cast: Solveig Andersson, Peder Kinberg, Lena Beckman, Egil Holmsen, Annette Arvidsson
1973, Nikkatsu, colour, 97m.

Sensuous Beasts
(Shinayaka na kemono-tachi)
しなやかな獣たち
Cast: Mari TANAKA, Yuri YAMASHINA (as Masako SAGA), Naomi TANI, Yuki TAKAMI
1972, Nikkatsu, colour, 81m.

Tokyo Emmanuelle
(Tôkyô emanieru fujin)
Alt. Emmanuelle in Tokyo
東京エマニエル夫人
Cast: Kumi TAGUCHI, Fujio MURAKAMI, Naka FUYUKI, Mitsuko AOI
1975, Nikkatsu, colour, 96m.

Fumihiko KATÔ

Oniroku Dan: Young Girl Wooden Horse Torture
(Dan Oniroku: shôjo mokuba-zeme)
団鬼六 少女木馬責め
Cast: Serina NISHIKAWA, Kazuyo EZAKI, Asami OGAWA, Shirô SHIMOMOTO
1982, Nikkatsu, colour, 68m.

Shigeki KAWAI

Naked Girl Mountain Range
(Hadaka onna sanmyaku)
裸女山脈
Cast: Rumi TAMA
1965, Tokyo Eiga Pro, B/W, 76m.

Jô KENZAKI

Easygoing
(Nonke)
のんけ
Cast: Teruhiko SAGA, Yoshiaki OZAWA, Hiroyuki ÔKI
1997, ENK, colour, 60m.

Easygoing 2: Let's Get Happy!
(Nonke II: Shiwase narôya!)
のんけ I I 幸せになろうや!
Cast: Teruhiko SAGA, Natsuki UMEDA
2003, ENK, colour, 60m.

See You Again: Hiroshima Story
(SEE YOU AGAIN - HIROSHIMA MONOGATARI -)
SEE YOU AGAIN - 広島物語 -
Cast: Teruhiko SAGA, Masahiko SUGIMOTO, Jun AIKAWA, Kazunori SHIBUYA
1994, ENK, colour, 60m.

Smell of Ice Cream
(Aisukurîmu no kahori)
アイスクリームのかほり
Cast: Natsuki UMEDA, Chie UMEDA
1991, ENK, colour, 60m.

Hideo KIJÔ

Married Women Who Want a Taste
(Ajimi shitai hitozuma-tachi)
味見したい人妻たち
Cast: Kaori, Ruri TACHIBANA, Asami SAKURA, Kenichi TAJIMA, Daisuke IJIMA
2003, ENK, colour, 60m.

Akitaka KIMATA

Human Flesh Market (Jinniku no ichi)
Alt. *Esclaves du Plaisir*
人肉の市
Cast: Eri ASHIKAWA
1969, Pro Taka, colour, unknown

The Key (Kagi)
鍵
Cast: Masumi OKADA, Kiyo MATSUO, Shingo EGAMI, Yuo TAGUCHI, Fumio WATANABE, Hatsuo YAMAYA
1983 (director's cut 1997), Wakamatsu Pro / Toei Central Films, colour, 98m.

River of Flesh (Nikutai no kawa)
肉体の河
Cast: unknown
1966, Pro Taka, B/W, unknown

Scoundrel (Okuri ôkami)
送り狼
Cast: Eri ASHIKAWA, Miki HAYASHI, Hachirô TSURUOKA, Masayoshi NOGAMI
1968, Pro Taka, unknown, unknown

Watcher in the Attic (Yaneura no sanpôsha)
屋根裏の散歩者
Cast: unknown
1970, Pro Taka, unknown, unknown

Shintarô KISHI

From Flower and Snake: Rearing the Flesh
See listing under Jirô MATSUBARA

Humiliated Woman
(Ojoku no onna)
汚辱の女
Cast: Yukari YAMABUKI, Yasuko MATSUI, Kazuko KANÔ, Hiroshi IKAIDA, Shôhei YAMAMOTO
1966, Yamabe Pro / Ôkura Eiga
B/W, 82m.
Note: Co-directed with Sojirô MOTOGLI (as Takeo TAKAGI)

Rope and Breasts
(Nawa to nyûbô)
縄と乳房
Cast: Keiko NIITAKA, Kuniko MASUDA, Yukari YAMABUKI, Hiroshi IKAIDA
1967, Yamabe Pro / Kantô Eihai
unknown, 69m.
Note: Co-directed with Ichirô KYÔDÔ

Yukio KITAZAWA

I Thought About You
(Omoide wa anata dake)
思いはあなただけ ~ I Thought About You ~
Cast: Yôta KAWASE, Osamu SHIMOOGAWA, Kyôzuke SASAKI, Hajime MAO, Hotaru HAZUKI
1997, IIZUMI
Production / ENK, colour, 61m.

Korean Masturbation Special: Self-Pleasuring Mania Women
(Kankoku onani supesharu: jii mania na onna-tachi)
韓国オナニースペシャル 自慰マニアな女たち
Cast: Hana, Ji-min Min, Wonbok Kim
2002, Total Media Corporation (V), colour, 60m.

Korean Wives: Hard and Wild
(Kankoku hitozuma-tachi: hageshiku, midara ni)
韓国の人妻たち 激しく、淫らに
Cast: Hana, Hyon-su, Ji-min Min, Wonbok Kim
2002, IIZUMI Production / Xces Film, colour, 60m.



Wet Virgin: Obscene Assault
(*Waisetsu shojo: Waisetsu book*)
濡れた処女 ワイセツ暴行
Cast: Naomi HAGIO, Utako KÔI, Kazuko TAKAHARA, Shirô SHIMOMOTO, Kazuhiro SANO, Yutaka IKEJIMA
1985, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 63m.

Masahiro KOBAYASHI

One Week
Orig. *One Week: Lust Diary*
(*Isshûkan: aiyoku nikki*)
一週間 愛欲日記
Cast: Hotaru HAZUKI, Yôta KAWASE
2000, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 62m.

Satoru KOBAYASHI

L'ambition dans le miroir
(*Kagami no naka no yashin*)
Trans. *Ambition in the Mirror*
鏡の中の野心
Cast: Ichirô ARAKI, Yuriko HISHIMI (as Kyôko TSUTSUMI), Hiroshi IMAIZUMI, Yasuko MATSUI, Mitsuko AOI, Masako TOGAWA, Yuriko AZUMA, Keiko AIKAWA
1972, Tôkatsu / Shochiku, colour, 96m.

Cruel Porno: Showa Era Bizarre Crime Record
(*Zangoku poruno: shôwa ryôki hanzai jitsuroku*)
残酷ポルノ 昭和猟奇犯罪実録
Cast: Mariya OGAWA, Kôju RAN
1972, Aoi Eiga, part colour, 70m.

Flesh Market
(*Nikutai ichiba*)
肉体市場
Cast: Tamaki KATORI, Hiroshi ASAMI, Shirô ENAMI, Kyôko ÔGIMACHI
1962, Ôkura Eiga, B/W, 49m.
Note: Only 21m. extant

The High School Girl Who Likes to Be Watched
(*Mitagaru jokôsei*)
見たがる女高生
Cast: Reiko ITA, Misa MIZUKI, Jun SHIRAISHI
1976, Tôkatsu / Shochiku, colour, 68m.

I Lost Control of Myself Like This
(*Watashi wa kô shite ushinatta*)
私はこうして失った
Cast: Junko MIYASHITA, Noriko YAMAMICHI, Misa AOYAMA, Kyôko TAKARAI, Mami SAKURA, Shôhei YAMAMOTO, Yuzuru ICHIMURA, Jun YOSHIDA
1971, Aoi Eiga, part colour, 74m.

Impotence
(*Funôsha*)
不能者
Cast: Eri NAKAJÔJI, Takeshi SHIMA, Yasuko MATSUI, Naomi TANI, Setsu SHIMIZU, Miki HAYASHI, Hiroko FUJI, Jun KITAMURA, Kôji KOKONOE, Hachirô TSURUOKA
1967, Kokuei, part colour, 87m.

Looking from Below
(*Shita kara miru*)
下から見る
Cast: Kei KAWAI, Kazuko SATÔ, Yumiko OKA
1981, Tôkatsu / Shochiku, colour, 70m.

Lusty Ghost Story: Rutting Woman Phantom
(*Shikiyoku kaidan: hatsujô onna yûrei*)
色欲怪談 発情女ゆうれい
Cast: Nao SAEJIMA, Kinako, Yumi YOSHIYUKI, Ryôko MOMOI, Yûichi MINATO
1995, Ôkura Eiga, colour, 60m.
Availability: E-Net Frontier (Japan, no subtitles)

The Mysterious Pearl of the Ama
(*Ama no kai-shinju*)
海女の怪真珠
Cast: Jôji UMEWAKA, Kyôko IZUMI
1963, Ôkura Eiga, colour, 87m.

Peeping Assault (Nozoki bôkô)
覗き暴行
Cast: Ei SHÔBUN, Risa AOKI
1977, Tôkatsu / Shochiku, colour, 67m.

Pervert's Pitfall (Chikan no otoshiana)
痴漢の落とし穴
Cast: Miyuki SUGIMOTO
1976, Tôkatsu / Shochiku, colour, 71m.

Pleasures of a Hussy (Abazure no etsuraku)
あばずれの悦楽
Cast: Yasuko MATSUI
1967, Roppô Eiga, colour, unknown

Takashi KODOMA

That's Roman Porno: Smiles of Goddesses
(*Zattsu roman poruno: megami-tachi no hohoemi*)
ザッツ・ロマンポルノ 女神たちの微笑み
Cast: Junko MIYASHITA, Keiko SEKINE, Jun MIHÔ
1988, Nikkatsu, colour, 95m.
Availability: Nikkatsu (Japan, no subtitles)
Note: Compilation of highlights from Roman Porno films.

Kazuo KOMIZU

Abnormal Naked Rape
(*Hentai zenra okashi*)
変態全裸犯し
Cast: Kazuhiro SANO, Jirô KOKUBU, Shinobu NAMI
1982, Shintocho, colour, 62m.

Entrails of a Beautiful Woman
(*Bijo no harawata*)
Alt. *Guts of a Beauty*
美女のはらわた
Cast: Megumi OZAWA, Junko ISHII, Shinji SEKIGAWA, Ken YOSHIKAWA
1986, Rokugetsu Gekijô / Nikkatsu, colour, 68m.
Availability: Synapse (US, English subtitles)

Entrails of a Virgin
(*Shojo no harawata*)
Alt. *Guts of a Virgin*
処女のはらわた
Cast: Saeko KIZUKI, Naomi HAGIO, Megumi KAWASHIMA, Osamu TSURUOKA
1986, Rokugetsu Gekijô / Nikkatsu, colour, 72m.
Availability: Synapse (US, English subtitles)

Modern-Day Sex Theory: Rape Me
(*Gendai seiai-ron: watashi o okashite*)
現代性愛論・私を犯して
Cast: unknown
1970, Wakamatsu Pro, part colour, 67m.

Rabbit Sex: Female Student Group Rape Incident
(*Rabbitto sekkusu: joshi gakusei danchi shûdan bôkô jiken*)
ラビットセックス 女子学生集団暴行事件
Cast: Yuka ASAGIRI, Masayoshi NOGAMI, Kayoko SUGI
1980, Kokuei / Shintocho, part colour, 61m.

Kiyoshi KOMORI

Absolutely Secret: Girl Torture
(*Gokuhi: onna gômon*)
極秘 女拷問
Cast: Naomi TANI
1968, Tokyo Kôei / Shintocho, part colour, 80m.

Japanese Torture Punishment History
(*Nihon gômon keibatsu-shi*)
日本拷問刑罰史
Cast: Misa MORI, Yôko MATSUSHIMA
1964, Shintocho, B/W, 88m.

Naked Woman Hell
(*Hadaka onna jigoku*)
裸女地獄
Cast: Kaoru MIYA
1968, Tokyo Kôei / Shintocho, part colour, 80m.

Yukihiko KONDÔ

High School Girl Report: Blooming Flower Yûko
(*Jokôsei repôto: hana hiraku Yûko*)
女高生レポート 花ひらく夕子
Cast: Yûko KATAGIRI, Mitsuko AOI, Mamoru HIRATA, Yôichi NISHIKAWA
1971, Nikkatsu, colour, 77m.

High School Girl Report: Yûko's White Breasts
(*Jokôsei repôto: Yûko no shiroi mune*)
女高生レポート 夕子の白い胸
Cast: Yûko KATAGIRI, Emiko YAMAGISHI, Yuki TAKAMI, Akira TAKAHASHI
1971, Nikkatsu, colour, 70m.

(*Secret*) *Ama Report: Unrequited Lust*
(*(Mitsu) Ama repôto: inzetsu*)
(秘) 海女レポート 淫絶
Cast: Rie TACHIBANA, Maki HIGUCHI, Yasunori ISHIZU, Midori MORI
1975, Nikkatsu, colour, 68m.

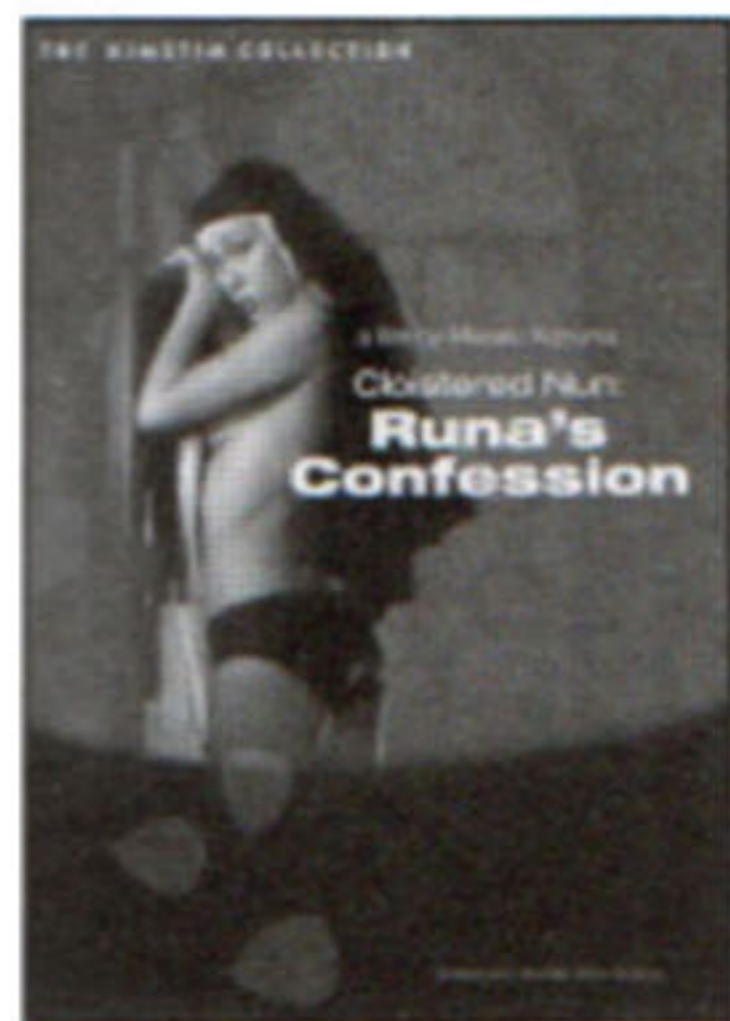
Tsutomu KONNO

Naked Insect
(*Hadaka mushi*)
裸虫
Cast: Keiko TACHIBANA
1965, Kokuei, B/W, 100m.

Masaru KONUMA

Call of the Pistil
(*Kashin no sasoi*)
花芯の誘い
Cast: Keiko MAKI, Gen MITAMURA, Tatsuya HAMAGUCHI, Toshihiko ODA, Rie SUZUKI, Peter Gordon, Akira TAKAHASHI
1971, Nikkatsu, colour, 66m.

Cloistered Nun: Runa's Confession
(Shûdôjo Runa no kokuhaku)



Trans. *Catholic Nun: Runa's Confession*
修道女ルナの告白
Cast: Runa TAKAMURA, Aoi NAKAJIMA, Kumi TAGUCHI, Yôko AZUSA, Shin NAKAMARU, Roger Prince
1976, Nikkatsu, colour, 74m.
Availability: Kino (US, English subtitles)

Corrida of Sex and Love (Sei to ai no korida)

性と愛のコリーダ
Cast: Natsuko YASHIRO, Asami OGAWA, Mitsuru KANDABASHI, Hirokazu INOUE, Nagatoshi SAKAMOTO, Naomi TANI
1977, Nikkatsu, colour, 86m.
Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)



Female Teacher: Delicious Life

(Onna kyôshi: umai seikatsu)
女教師 甘い生活
Cast: Ayako ICHIKAWA, Aoi NAKAJIMA, Nozomi YASUDA, Naomi OKA, Tamaki KOMIYAMA, Akiko YOSHII
1973, Nikkatsu, colour, 73m.

Flower and Snake (Hana to hebi)

Alt. *Flower and Snake '74*
花と蛇
Cast: Naomi TANI, Nagatoshi SAKAMOTO, Yasunori ISHIZU, Hiroko FUJI, Akira TAKAHASHI, Hijiri ABE
1974, Nikkatsu, colour, 73m.
Availability: Media Blasters (US, English subtitles)



Lady Karuizawa (Karuizawa fujin)

軽井沢夫人
Cast: Miwa TAKADA, Takayuki GODAI, Yumi YOSHIKAWA, Akemi NEGISHI, Yoshio TSUCHIYA, Yôko AZUSA
1982, Nikkatsu, colour, 93m.
Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

Rope and Breasts (Nawa to nyûbô)

縄と乳房
Cast: Nami MATSUKAWA, Izumi SHIMA, Akira TAKAHASHI
1983, Nikkatsu, colour, 69m.
Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

Tattooed Flower Vase
(Kashin no irezumi: ureta tsubo)

Trans. *Tattoo of a Pistil: Mature Pot*
花芯の刺青 熟れた壺
Cast: Naomi TANI, Takako KITAGAWA, Shin NAKAMARU, Genshû HANAYAGI, Mami YÛKI, Tamaki KOMIYAMA
1976, Nikkatsu, colour, 74m.
Availability: Kino (US, English subtitles), Allociné (France, French subtitles) as *La vie secrète de Madame Yoshino*



Wet Vase (Nureta tsubo)

濡れた壺
Cast: Naomi TANI, Maki MIZUNO, Rie TACHIBANA, Hiroko FUJI, Kyôko NAITÔ, Yôko AZUSA, Shin NAKAMARU
1976, Nikkatsu, colour, 69m.

Wife to Be Sacrificed (Ikenie fujin)

生贄夫人
Cast: Naomi TANI, Terumi AZUMA, Nagatoshi SAKAMOTO, Hidetoshi KAGEYAMA, Chigusa TAKAYAMA
1974, Nikkatsu, colour, 78m.
Availability: Kino (US, English subtitles) with Hideo Nakata's documentary *Sadistic & Masochistic* (2001)



Woman in a Box: Virgin Sacrifice

(Hako no naka no onna: shojo ikenie)
箱の中の女 処女いけに
Cast: Reiko AOI, Saeko KIZUKI, Hiroshi TAMURA, Takashi OBARA
1985, Nikkatsu, colour, 82m.
Availability: Uplink (Japan, no subtitles)

Woman in a Box 2
(Hako no naka no onna 2)

箱の中の女 2
Cast: Shihori NAGASAKA, Miyuki KAWAMURA, Mami OGAWA
1988, Nikkatsu, colour, 73m.
Availability: Uplink (Japan, no subtitles)



Tatsumi KUMASHIRO

Black Rose Ascension (Kuro-bara shôten)

黒薔薇昇天
Cast: Shin KISHIDA, Naomi TANI, Meika SERI, Akira TAKAHASHI, Hatsuo YAMAYA, Terumi AZUMA
1975, Nikkatsu, colour, 72m.
Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

The Key (Kagi)

鍵
Cast: Hideo KANZE, Yuki ARASA, Tokuko WATANABE, Kenzô KAWARAZAKI, Moeko EZAWA
1974, Nikkatsu, colour, 90m.
Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

Life of a Striptease Lover (Kaburitsuki jinsei)

Trans. *Life at the Front-Row Seat of the Theatre*
Alt. *A Thirsty Life*
かぶりつき人生
Cast: Hatsue TONOOKA, Shizu NIWA
1968, Nikkatsu, colour, 94m.



Love Bites Back (Kamu onna)

Trans. *Woman Who Chews*
噛む女
Cast: Kaori MOMOI, Toshiyuki NAGASHIMA, Mitsuru HIRATA, Kimiko YO, Naoto TAKENAKA
1988, Nikkatsu (Ropponica), colour, 102m.

Madoka Mika: The Woman Who Wets Her Finger

(Mika Madoka: yubi o nurasu onna)

美加マドカ 指を濡らす女
Cast: Madoka MIKA, Takashi NAITÔ, Kiriko SHIMIZU, Usagi ASÔ, Hiroko FUJI, Seru RANDÔ
1984, Nikkatsu, colour, 89m.



Pleasure School: Forbidden Games
(Kairaku gakuen: kinjirareta asobi)

快樂学園 禁じられた遊び
Cast: Ayako ÔTA, Rie KITAHARA, Junko MIYASHITA, Asami OGAWA, Yuri YAMASHINA, Hideaki ESUMI, Aoi NAKAJIMA, Masayoshi NOGAMI, Akira TAKAHASHI
1980, Nikkatsu, colour, 67m.

Sayuri Ichijô: Wet Lust (Ichijô Sayuri: nureta yokujô)

Alt. *Following Desire*

一条さゆり 濡れた欲情

Cast: Sayuri ICHIJÔ, Hiroko ISAYAMA, Kazuko SHIRAKAWA, Akira TAKAHASHI, Moeko EZAWA
1972, Nikkatsu, colour, 69m.
Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)



Street of Joy (Akasen tamanoi: nukeraremasu)

赤線玉の井 ぬけられます
Cast: Junko MIYASHITA, Keizô KANIE, Kunio SHIMIZU, Sôichirô MAENO, Naomi OKA, Toshihiko ODA, Moeko EZAWA, Meika SERI, Akira TAKAHASHI, Ai YOSHINO, Aoi NAKAJIMA
1974, Nikkatsu, colour, 78m.
Availability: Hanzibar Films (UK, English subtitles)

Twisted Path of Love (Koibito-tachi wa nureta)

Trans. *Lovers Are Wet*
恋人たちは濡れた
Cast: Rie NAKAGAWA, Moeko EZAWA, Chizuyu AZAMI, Kôichi HORI, Akira TAKAHASHI, Tôru ÔE
1973, Nikkatsu, colour, 76m.
Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

Wet Desire: Special Appearance 21 People (Nureta yokujô: tokudashi 21-nin)

濡れた欲情 特出し 21人
Cast: Yûko KATAGIRI, Meika SERI, Moeko EZAWA, Yoshinori FURUKAWA, Akira TAKAHASHI, Ai YOSHINO
1974, Nikkatsu, colour, 77m.

Wet Lips

(*Nureta kuchibiru*)

濡れた唇

Cast: Moeko EZAWA, Keiko AIKAWA, Yuri YAMASHINA, Hajime TANIMOTO
1972, Nikkatsu, colour, 75m.

Woman with the Red Hair

(*Akai kami no onna*)

赤い髪の女

Cast: Junko MIYASHITA, Renji ISHIBASHI, Ako (2), Miyako YAMAGUCHI, Moeko EZAWA, Hatsuo YAMAYA, Yôko ISHIDÔ, Akira TAKAHASHI
1979, Nikkatsu, colour, 73m.
Availability: Kino (US, English subtitles), Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

Woman with the Red Hat

(*Akai bôshi no onna*)

Alt. *Die Frau Mit Den Ruten Hut*

赤い帽子の女

Cast: Toshiyuki NAGASHIMA, Shigeru IZUMIYA, Kristina Van Eyck, Erhart Hartmann, Bernd Stephan
1982 (Germany: 1984)
Wakamatsu Pro / Herald Ace / Monopteros Film, colour, 104m.

Woods Are Wet

(*Onna jigoku: mori wa nureta*)

Trans. *Woman Hell: Woods Are Wet*

女地獄 森は濡れた

Cast: Hiroko ISAYAMA, Rie NAKAGAWA, Hatsuo YAMAYA, Yuri YAMASHINA, Kôichi HORI, Moeko EZAWA, Akira TAKAHASHI
1973, Nikkatsu, colour, 65m.
Availability: Uplink (Japan, no subtitles)

World of Geisha

(*Yojôhan fusuma no ura-bari*)

Trans. *Behind the Four-and-a-Half Tatami Sliding Door*

四畳半襖の裏張り

Cast: Junko MIYASHITA, Hideaki ESUMI, Hatsuo YAMAYA, Naomi OKA, Moeko EZAWA, Meika SERI
1973, Nikkatsu, colour, 72m.
Availability: Kino (US, English subtitles), Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

World of Geisha 2: The Precocious Lad

(*Yojôhan fusuma no urabari: shinobihada*)

Trans. *Behind the Sliding Door: Chaste Skin*

四畳半襖の裏張り しのび肌

Cast: Junko MIYASHITA, Hideaki ESUMI, Naomi OKA, Moeko EZAWA, Meika SERI, Akira TAKAHASHI, Ai YOSHINO
1974, Nikkatsu, colour, 81m.
Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

Minoru KUNIZAWA

Irresistible Angel: Suck It All Up

(*Nôsetsu tenshi: sûi tsukushite*)

悩殺天使 吸い尽くして

Vid. *Sex★Beast★Battle★Front (Sei*

★jû★sen★sen)

性★獣★戦★線

Cast: Ruri TACHIBANA, Kei MIYAZAWA, Ryôko ASAGI
2003, OP Eiga, colour, 60m.
Availability: Uplink (Japan, no subtitles)

Kiyoshi KUROSAWA

Kandagawa Pervert Wars

(*Kandagawa inran sensô*)

神田川淫乱戦争

Cast: Usagi ASÔ, Makoto MINO, Hôen KISHINO, Miiko SAWAKI, Tatsuya MORI, Masayuki SUÔ
1983, Director's Company / Million Film, colour, 60m.
Availability: Uplink (Japan, no subtitles)



Morihei MAGADANI

Girl Divers at Spook Mansion

(*Ama no bakemono yashiki*)

海女の化物屋敷

Cast: Yôko MIHARA, Bunta SUGAWARA, Reiko SETO, Masayo BANRI
1959, Shintocho, B/W, 81m.
Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)



Chise MATOBA

See Sachi HAMANO

Jirô MATSUBARA

From Flower and Snake: Rearing the Flesh

(*Hana to hebi yori: niku no shiiku*)

花と蛇より 肉の飼育

Cast: Naomi TANI, Kôju RAN, Mari IWAI, Shôhei YAMAMOTO, Kenji MIYASE
1968, Yamabe Pro, colour, 67m.
Note: Co-directed with Shintarô KISHI

Devilish Married Woman

See listing under Sojirô MOTOGI

Wet Woman (Nureta onna)

濡れた女

Cast: Keiko TACHIBANA, Keiko YAMANAKA, Yasuko MORI, Hiroshi IKAIDA, Shôhei YAMAMOTO
1965, Tôkyô Kikaku, B/W, 77m.

The Whip and the Perverted Beast (Muchi to injû)

鞭と陰獣

Cast: Naomi TANI, Jôji NAGAOKA, Hiromi YAMAURA
1968, Yamabe Pro / Million Film colour, 73m.

Yasuji MATSUURA

The Constellation of Roses (Bara no seiza)

薔薇の星座

Cast: Shigekazu NAKAJIMA, Takeshi YOSHIMOTO, Masayoshi NOGAMI, Ryûji YAMAMOTO
1982, Gendai Eizô Kikaku / Toei Central Films, colour, 58m.

Roses, the Sea and the Sun

(*Bara to umi to taiyô to*)

薔薇と海と太陽と

Cast: Tatsuya NAGATOMO, Tôru NODA
1982, World Eiga / Toei Central Films, colour, 59m.

White Does (Shiroi mejika-tachi)

白い牡鹿たち

Cast: Aya MUSÔ, Shô NAMIKI, Masaki WATANABE, Minako TANAKA
1982, Aesthetic Kikaku / Toei Central Films, colour, 58m.

Mitsuru MEIKE

Bitter Sweet (Bitâ suito)

ビタースイート

Orig. *Concentrated Adultery: Taken Woman*

(*Noko-furin: torareta onna*)

濃厚不倫 とられた女

Cast: Konatsu, Kin ISHIKAWA, Yumika HAYASHI, Kazuhiro SANO, Takuya FUKUSHIMA, Minami AOYAMA
2004, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 58m.
Availability: Salvation (UK, English subtitles)

The Glamorous Life of Sachiko Hanai (Hanai

Sachiko karei na shôgai)

花井さちこの華麗な生涯

Orig. *Horny Home Tutor: Teacher's Love Juice*

(*Hatsujô katei kyôshi: sensei no aijiru*)

発情家庭教師 先生の愛汁

Cast: Emi KURODA, Kyôko HAYAMI, Kanae MIZUHARA, Takeshi ITÔ, Yukijirô HOTARU, Tetsuaki MATSUE, Yôta KAWASE
2004, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 90m. (originally 65m.)
Availability: Uplink (Japan, English subtitles), Rapid Eye Movies (Germany, German subtitles/dialogue), Palm Pictures (US, English subtitles)

It Don't Mean a Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing

Alt. *Swing*

Orig. *Swapping Night: Dangerous Flirtation*

(*Suwappingu naito: abunai na tawamure*)

スワッピング・ナイト 危険な戯れ

Cast: Hotaru HAZUKI, Takeshi ITÔ, Yuki, Takashi MIZUNO, Mutsuo YOSHIOKA
2002, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 67m.
Availability: Salvation (UK, English subtitles)

Nurse's Diary: Twice and Three Times While Still

Wet (Byakui inran nikki: nureta mama ni-do,

san-do)

白衣いんらん日記 濡れたまま二度、三度

Vid. *Rookie Nurse Confession (Kokuhaku shinjin kangofu)*

告白新人看護婦

Cast: Mariko YOSHIOKA, Satoru JITSUNASHI, Kikujirô HONDA, Mai KAWANA
1997, Shintocho, colour, 60m.
Availability: Airfield (Japan, no subtitles) VHS

Secondhand Love (Sekonhan rabu)

セコハン・ラブ

Orig. *The Naughty Office Lady: Stay in Me Until*

Morning (Tain OL: asa made nukanaide)

多淫OL 朝まで抜かないで

Cast: Yumeka SASAKI, Yôta KAWASE, Masataka MATSUBARA, Shiori KAWAMURA, Meguri MATSUSHIMA
2000, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 63m.

Shameful Family: Pin Down Technique

(*Harenchi famirî: newaza de ippatsu*)

ハレンチ・ファミリー 寝ワザで一発

Cast: Kazuhiro SANO, Junki KONNO, Yoshimi KINUTA, Kanae MIZUHARA, Hidehisa EBATA, Motoko SASAKI, Kikujirô HONDA
2002, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 61m.

Snow/Woman

Orig. *Adulterous Wife: Flaming Passion*

(*Furin-zuma: jôen*)

不倫妻 情炎

Cast: Yôta KAWASE, Kiyomi ITÔ, Shiori KURODA, Kikujirô HONDA, Shirô SHIMOMOTO
2000, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 62m.
Availability: Salvation (UK, English subtitles)

(*STOP USING*) *SEX AS A WEAPON + (JUST LIKE)*

STARTING OVER (Maru de saishuppatsu)

まるで再出発 (STOP USING) SEX AS A

WEAPON+ (JUST LIKE) STARTING OVER

Orig. *Sopping Wet Beautician: Horny Lower Quarters*

(*Gusho nure-biyôshi sukebe na shimohanshin*)

ぐしょ濡れ美容師 すけべな下半身

Cast: Yumeka SASAKI, Yôji TANAKA, Yôta KAWASE, Tomomi AIZAWA, Kenichi TAJIMA
1998, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 65m.
Availability: Uplink (Japan, no subtitles)

Hideki MIKI

Code of Love (Shokudô jingi)

色道仁義

Cast: Masayoshi NOGAMI, Shôhei YAMAMOTO, Kôji SATOMI, Hachirô TSURUOKA, Morio CHIKUMA, Yûichi MINATO, Jôji ICHIMURA, Hiroshi NIKAI DÔ, Jun KITAMURA, Jirô KOKUBU, Setsu SHIMIZU, Nami KATSURA, Naomi TANI, Miki HAYASHI, Mari NAGISA, Kôju RAN, Noriko TATSUMI, Yukari YAMABUKI
1968, Yamabe Pro / Nihon Cinema colour, 69m.

When a Woman Gets Satisfied: Devilish Wife

(*Onna ga michitasareru toki: mashô-zuma*)

女が満たされる時 魔性妻

Cast: Naomi TANI, Mari IWAI, Michiko SEKI
1969, Tani Production / Million Film, colour, 75m.

Kei MIYAGUCHI

Adulteress (Kanpu)

姦婦

Cast: Katsuko WAKASUGI
1965, Wadachi Pro / Kantô Movie, B/W, unknown

Rokurô MOCHIZUKI

B-Grade Video Correspondence: AV Guy:

Extraction Shop Ken

(*B-kyû bideo tsûshin: AV yarô: nukase-ya Ken-chan*)

B級ビデオ通信 AV野郎・抜かせ屋ケンちゃん

Cast: Daigo UEDA, Rokurô MOCHIZUKI, Hana MIYAJIMA, Mayuko SASAKI, Masayoshi NOGAMI
2000, Xces Film, colour, 83m.

Miss Masturbation: My Steamy Private Life

(*Onanie musume: midara na shiseikatsu*)

ONANIE嬢 みだらな私生活

Cast: Ayumi MOCHIZUKI, Mari AIHARA, Kayoko SUGI, Masayoshi NOGAMI
1985, Million Film, colour, 60m.

Real Performance Video: To Strip

(*Honban bideo: hagu*)

本番ビデオ 剥ぐ

Cast: Megumi AKIMOTO, Kaede HAYASHI, Daisuke IJIMA
1985, Million Film, colour, 60m.

Yoshimitsu MORITA

Pink Cut: Loving Hard, Loving Deep

(*Pinku katto: futoku ai shite fukaku si shite*)

ピンクカット 太く愛して深く愛して

Cast: Mayumi TERASHIMA, Katsunobu ITÔ, Mai INOUE, Ryôko WATANABE, Chie YAMAGUCHI, Mika YAMAJI
1983, Nikkatsu, colour, 68m.

True: A Rumoured Stripper

(*(Hon) uwasa no sutorippa*)

(本) 噂のストリッパー

Cast: Yasuyuki MIYAWAKI, Kaori OKAMOTO, Nami MISAKI, Ayako ÔTA
1982, Nikkatsu, colour, 67m.



Sojirô MOTOGI

Devilish Married Woman

(*Majô no hitozuma*)

魔性の人妻

Cast: Yasuko MATSUI, Keiko TACHIBANA, Shôhei YAMAMOTO, Hiroshi IKAIDA
1966, Yamabe Pro / Meikô Select, B/W, 75m.
(directed as Takeo TAKAGI)

Free Trade in Flesh (Nikutai jiyû boeki)

肉体自由貿易

Cast: unknown
1962, Kokushin Eiga, B/W, unknown

Girl University Student: Virgin Play

(*Joshi Gakusei: Shôjo Asobi*)

女子学生 処女遊び

Cast: unknown
1968, Unifilm, B/W, unknown
(directed as Shôji SHINAGAWA)

Humiliated Woman (1966)

See listing under Shintarô KISHI

Peeping Heaven (Nozoki tengoku)

女子学生 処女遊び

Cast: unknown
1974, Million Film, colour, 72m.
(directed as Yoshikazu KISHIMOTO)

Sensual College Girl: I Want to Give It to You!

(*Kôshoku joshi daisei: agechaitai!*)

好色女子大生 あげちゃいたい!

Cast: Yôko SAKAKI, Yôko KITA, Satomi NODA
1977, Million Film, colour, 60m.
(directed as Yoshikazu KISHIMOTO)

Women: Three Hundred and Sixty Five Nights

(*Onna: sanbyaku rokjûgo yoru*)

女・三百六十五夜

Cast: Keiko NIITAKA, Akiko HANAMURA, Yôko SAEGUSA, Hachirô TSURUOKA
1966, Cine Unimonde / Meikô Select, B/W, 78m.
(directed as Takeo TAKAGI)

Kan MUKAI

Assault Young Girl Diary: Female

(*Bôkô shôjo nikki: mesu*)

暴行少女日記 女 (メス)

Cast: Kemi ISHIBOSHI, Shinji KUBO
1968, Mukai Pro, part colour, 81m.

Bait (Esa)

Alt. *The Bite*

餌

Cast: Michiko SHIROYAMA, Machiko MATSUMOTO, Senjô ICHIRIKI

1966, Tôkyô Geijutsu Pro / Kokuei, B/W, 63m.

Availability: Cinema Epoch (US, English subtitles)

Blue Film Woman (Burû fuirumu no onna)

ブルーフィルムの女

Cast: Miki HASHIMOTO, Rika KOYANAGI, Mitsugu FUJII, Takako UCHIDA
1969, Kokuei, colour, 80m.

Availability:

Hummingbird (Japan, no subtitles) VHS

Catholic Nun: Secret

(*Shûdôjo: himegoto*)

修道女 一秘め事一

Cast: Mayuko HINO, Mako KITANO, Mariko KITAZAWA

1978, Universe Pro / Toei New Porno, colour, 62m.

Continuation: Chronicle of an Affair

(*Zoku: jôji no rirekisho*)

続・情事の履歴書

Cast: Anzu KITAMIKA

1966, Tôkyô Geijutsu Pro / Kokuei, unknown, unknown

Continuation: Flesh (Zoku: niku)

Alt. *Flesh 2*

続・肉

Cast: Yuko MAYA, Fred Silver
1968, Asakura Pro / Kokuei, part colour, 73m.

Deep Throat in Tokyo

(*Tôkyô dîpu surôto fujin*)

Trans. *Tokyo Deep Throat Madam*

東京ディープスロート夫人

Cast: Kumi TAGUCHI, Tetsuya CHIBA, Hideo MUROTA, Fumio WATANABE
1975, Toei, B/W, 77m.

Flesh (Niku)

Alt. *Naked Flesh*

肉

Cast: Kimiko ASUKA, Takako UCHIDA
1965, Tôkyô Geijutsu Pro / Kokuei, B/W, 81m.



Flesh Futon

Spring, Summer, Autumn Winter: Flesh Futon

(*Shunkashûtô: niku futon*)

春夏秋冬：肉布団

Cast: Shinji KUBO, Kenji MIYASE, Kumi SUGIMURA, Yuki TAKAMI, Hiroko FUJI, Nashiko SHIMAE

1971, Kokuei, part colour, 71m.

Availability: Hummingbird (Japan, no subtitles)
VHS

Forbidden Bound Wife

(*Hakkin shibari fujin*)

発禁縛り夫人

Cast: Jirô KOKUBU, Mako KITANO, Mami SAKURA

1978, Shintohe, colour, 63m.

Girls Dormitory

(*Joshi-ryô*)

女子寮

Cast: Kazuko SHIRAKAWA, Michiko SAKYÔ

1967, Nihon Geijutsu Kyôkai / Kantô Movie, B/W, 73m.

Sale Prohibited Bound Wife

(*Hakkin shibari fujin*)

発禁縛り夫人

Cast: Jirô KOKUBU, Mako KITANO, Mami SAKURA

1978, Shintohe, colour, 63m.

Tôru MURAKAWA

Circuit of Sorrow

(*Aishû no sâkitto*)

哀愁のサーキット

Cast: Ryûnosuke MINEGISHI, Kei KIYAMA, Gorô HIDAHA, Michiko KOMORI, Miyoko AOYAMA, Hideaki ESUMI, Moeko EZAWA

1972, Nikkatsu, colour, 69m.



Playful White Fingers

(*Shiroi yubi no tawamure*)

白い指の戯れ

Cast: Ichirô ARAKI, Hiroko ISAYAMA, Hajime TANIMOTO, Yôko ISHIDÔ, Hiroshi GOJÔ

1972, Nikkatsu, colour, 78m.

Availability: Uplink

(Japan, no subtitles)

Sensual Zone: Sorrowful Pimp

(*Kannô chitai: kanoshimi no zegen*)

官能地帯 哀しみの女街

Cast: Miyoko AOYAMA, Mitsuko AOI, Hideaki ESUMI, Hajime TANIMOTO, Moeko EZAWA, Keiko AIKAWA

1972, Nikkatsu, colour, 72m.

Makoto NAITÔ

Porno Emperor

(*Poruno no teiô*)

ポルノの帝王

Cast: Tatsuo UMEMIYA, Shingo YAMASHIRO, Naoko FUJIYAMA, Tomoko MAYAMA

1971, Toei, colour, 87m.

Shun NAKAHARA

Bridal Night Sea (Shoya no umi)

初夜の海

Cast: Kaoru ODA, Mariko NISHINA, Mami MOCHIZUKI, Chie HIGASHI

1984, Nikkatsu, colour, 70m.

Candidate for Seduction (Okasare shigan)

犯され志願

Cast: Shôko ARIAKE, Reiko NATSU, Yuki KAZAMATSURI

1982, Nikkatsu, colour, 68m.

Miss Eve's Petals (Ivu-chan no hana-bara)

イヴちゃんの花びら

Cast: Eve, Ayako ÔTA, Saeko KIZUKI, Akira HANAUE, Akio KANEDA

1984, Nikkatsu, colour, 65m.

Slave Contract: Whip and High Heels (Dorei keiyakusho: muchi to haihîru)

奴隷契約書 鞭とハイヒール

Cast: Nami MATSUKAWA, Akihiko KANBARA, Akira SAKAI, Usagi ASÔ, Nobutaka MASATOMI

1982, Nikkatsu, colour, 68m.

Genji NAKAMURA

Beautiful Mystery

(*Kyokon densetsu: utsukushiki nazo*)

Alt. *Beautiful Mystery: The Legend of Big Horn*

Trans. *Legend of the Giant Cock:*

Beautiful Mystery

巨根伝説 美しき謎

Cast: Ren ÔSUGI, Tatsuya NAGATOMO, Masayoshi NOGAMI, Kei SHUTÔ, Kaoru YAMASHINA

1983, Genji Pro / ENK, colour, 60m.

Availability: Water Bearer Films

(US, English subtitles)



Document Porno: Married Woman

Prostitution Techniques

(*Dokumento poruno: hitozuma baishun no teguchi*)

ドキュメントポルノ 人妻売春の手口

Cast: Kyôko MIZUNO, Madoka MIZUKI, Kayoko SUGI

1981, Watanabe Pro, colour, 61m.

Pachinko Guy: That Hole This Hole (Pachinko yarô: ano ana kono ana)

パチンコ野郎 あの穴この穴

Cast: Bunmei TOBAYAMA, Ami TAKATORI, Mami SAKURA

1978, Genji Pro / Million Film, colour, 65m.

Virgin Rope Doll (Shôjo nawa ningyô)

少女縄人形

Cast: Kaoru KAZE, Satsuki WATANABE

1983, Million Film, colour, 60m.

Woman Crime Demon (Johan-ma)

女犯魔

Cast: Ryô OKADA, Kei OGAWA, Midori ISHINO, Chiyo TACHIKAWA, Hiroko FUJI, Rika MINASE

1977, Genji Pro / Million Film, part colour, 62m.

Availability: Ace Deuce (Japan, no subtitles)



Takao NAKANO

Metomic: Hand-to-Hand Battle Royale

(*Metomikku faito: ikudan batoru rowaiyaru*)

女闘美ックファイトー 肉弾バトル・ロワイヤル

Cast: Kei MIZUTANI, Yôko SATOMI, Shôko KUDÔ, Amarita, Takao NAKANO

2001, Total Media Corporation (V), colour, 60m.

Availability: Total Media Corporation (Japan, no subtitles)



Playgirl 7: Most Extreme Bawdy Games

(*Pureigârû 7: motto mo midara na yûgi*)

プレイガール7 最も淫らな遊戯

Cast: Ruka KASHIWAGI, Fûka SAKURAI, Shinobu REI, Ai NANASE

2002, Shintohe, colour, 61m.

Availability: Sexia (Japan, no subtitles)

Shogun's Secret Harem

(*Edo-jô ô-oku kitan: dai-inran tô emaki*)

Trans. *Edo Castle Shogun's Harem Romantic Story: Big Debauchery Melting Picture Scroll*

江戸城大奥綺譚 大淫乱蕩絵巻

Cast: Yumi YOSHIYUKI, Shôko KUDÔ, Yumika HAYASHI, Hotaru HAZUKI, Madoka KAWAI

1998, GOT (V), colour, 90m.

Spiral Zone (Nyetai uzumaki chitai)

Trans. *Woman's Body Spiral Zone*

女体渦巻地帯 SPIRAL ZONE

Orig. *Super Extreme Real*

Performance: *Stupefaction (Chô kageki honban: shashin)*

超過激本番 失神

Cast: Aya MIZUSHIMAKAWA, Ryûji YAMAMOTO, Reika KAZAMI, Kanichi HIRAGA

1992, Shintohe, colour, 58m.

Availability: Uplink (Japan, no

subtitles)

Sumo Vixens

(*Hana no onna sumô*)

Trans. *Flower Woman*

Sumo

花のおんな相撲

Cast: Kei MIZUTANI, Arase, Eba, Shôko KUDÔ

1996, Total Media Corporation (V), colour, 74m.

Availability: Park Media (US, English subtitles)



That's Hentai-tainment (1991)

See listing under Toshiki Satô

Hideo NAKATA

Secret Camera Pick-Up Technique

((*Ura*): *Tôsatsu nanpa-dô*)

(裏) 盗撮ナンパ道

Cast: Hidehisa OKAMOTO, Kaoru HIGUCHI, Moe ISHIKAWA, Sabu (Hiroyuki TANAKA)

1996, Nikkatsu (V), colour, 75m.

Hiroyuki NASU

Rouge (Rûju)

ルージュ

Cast: Emi SHINDÔ, Shôhei HINO, Kazuyo MATSUI

1984, Nikkatsu, colour, 95m.

Kichitarô NEGISHI

Cabaret Diary (Kyabarê nikki)

キャバレー日記

Cast: Midori TAKEI, Katsunobu ITÔ, Kôichi UEDA, Toshiyuki KITAMI, Hiromi OKAMOTO

1982, Nikkatsu, colour, 81m.

Crazed Fruit (Kurutta kajitsu)

狂った果実

Cast: Yûji HONMA, Yuki NINAGAWA, Nobutaka MASATOMI, Eiko NAGASHIMA

1981, Nikkatsu, colour, 85m.

Availability: Uplink (Japan, no subtitles)

Jin NIMURA

The Childbirth (Ze chussan)

ザ・出産

Cast: Juri TAKAHASHI, Kumi UESUGI, Risa HAYAKAWA

1986, Graphis / Nikkatsu, colour, 71m.

The Real Performance: Actress Audition Edition (Za honban - jôyu ôdishun-hen)

ザ・本番 〜女優オーディション篇〜

Cast: Reika KANÔ, Mayu HOSHINO, Rina FUJII

1987, Graphis / Nikkatsu, colour, 71m.

The Real Performance: Model Audition Edition (Za honban: moderu ôdishun-hen)

ザ・本番 モデルオーディション篇

Cast: Asako MINAKAWA, Kazue SHIMADA, Yûko MORISHITA

1986, Graphis / Nikkatsu, colour, 57m.

The Real Performance: OL Employment Test (Za honban - OL saiyô shiken)

ザ本番 OL 採用 試験

Cast: Yukari AOKI, Yuko HARADA, Mari ÔNO, Naomi KITANO

1987, Graphis / Nikkatsu, colour, 70m.

Yôsuke NISHIDA

Sensuous Wife: Keep Putting It In

(Kannô fujin: irreponashi)

官能夫人 入れっぱなし

Cast: Ami TAKATORI, Megumi KISHIMOTO, Yûichi MINATO

1983, Shishi Pro / Toei Central Films, colour, 60m.

Giichi NISHIHARA

The Devil Dwells in a Woman's Valley

(Onna no tani ni akuma ga sumu)

女の谷に悪魔が棲む

Cast: Hirimi NAKA, Rina TAKASE, Aki UEHARA, Yuri IZUMI

1972, Aoi Eiga, part colour, 70m.

Note: Colour sequences are tinted monochrome (directed as Shirô SEKIYA)



Female Trap

(Mesu-wana)

牝罠

Cast: Tamaki KATORI, Michi NAKAHARA, Chiyo MORIZÔ, Mari NAGISA, Jirô KOKUBU

1967, Aoi Eiga, part colour, 66m.

Highway of Passion (Gekijô no haiuê)

激情のハイウェー

Cast: Mayumi AOI, Isao MATSUI, Setsuko MORIYA

1965, Aoi Eiga, B/W, 66m.

Sexy Angel (Oiroke tenshi)

おいろけ天使

Cast: Tamaki KATORI, Kazuko SHIRAKAWA, Setsu SHIMIZU, Kôhei TSUZAKI, Jôji ICHIMURA, Kemi ISHIBOSHI

1969, Aoi Eiga, part colour, 74m.

Staircase of Sex (Sei no kaidan)

性の階段

Cast: Tamaki KATORI, Edie McNair, Marilyn Weir

1968, Aoi Eiga, part colour, 71m.

Temptation of the Flesh (Nikutai no yûwaku)

肉体の誘惑

Cast: Tamaki KATORI, Chiyo MORIZÔ, Noriko CHIZUKI, Masayoshi NOGAMI, Yûichi MINATO

1967, Aoi Eiga, colour, 72m.

Shôgorô NISHIMURA

Apartment Wife: Afternoon Affair

(Danchi-zuma: hirusagari no jôji)

団地妻 昼下がりの情事

Cast: Kazuko SHIRAKAWA, Tatsuya HAMAGUCHI, Yôko MITA, Maki NANJÔ

1971, Nikkatsu, colour, 64m.

Bockens Hus (Injû no yado)

Trans. *Inn of Perverted Beasts*

淫獣の宿

Cast: Inger Sundh, Lennart Norbäck, Per Jansson, Per-Axel Arosenius, Tina Möller

1973, Nikkatsu, colour, 88m.

A Call Girl's Testimony: Exposure

(Aru kôru gâru no shôgen: roshutsu)

あるコールガールの証言 露出

Cast: Kumi TAGUCHI, Tony WADA, Shinzô HORITA, Naomi OKA, Jun TODOKI, Robert William

1976, Nikkatsu, colour, 67m.

Crimson Night Dream (Kôyamu)

紅夜夢

Cast: Takako SHINNÔZUKA, Nenji KOBAYASHI, Shingo YAMAMOTO, Hiroshi NAWA

1983, Nikkatsu, colour, 76m.

Cruel Female Love Suicide (Zankoku onna jôshi)

残酷おんな情死

Cast: Annu MARI, Sanae ÔHORI, Shinji TAKANO

1970, Nikkatsu, colour, 85m.

Extreme Indulgence Woman: Pleasure Deep Within

(Inzetsu fujin: kairaku no oku)

淫絶夫人 快楽の奥

Cast: Rumi TAMA, Aoi NAKAJIMA, Rei OKAMOTO

1976, Nikkatsu, colour, 71m.

Flower and Snake: Hell Edition

(Hana to hebi: jigoku-hen)

花と蛇 地獄篇

Cast: Kaori ASÔ, Mami FUJIMURA, Akemi NAGISA,

Kayo KIYOMOTO

1985, Nikkatsu, colour, 69m.

Gate of Flesh

(Nikutai no mon)

肉体の門

Cast: Reiko KAYAMA, Tokuko WATANABE, Miyako YAMAGUCHI, Izumi SHIMA,

Junko MIYASHITA, Seiji ENDÔ

1977, Nikkatsu, colour, 97m.

New Apartment Wife: Prostitution Group Building 13

(Shin danchi-zuma: baishun gurûpu 13 gôkan)

新・団地妻 売春グループ13号館

Cast: Rumi TAMA, Hidetoshi KAGEYAMA, Meika SERI, Midori MORI

1975, Nikkatsu, colour, 76m.

Oniroku Dan: Rope and Skin

(Dan Oniroku: nawa to hada)

団鬼六 縄と肌

Cast: Naomi TANI, Yuri YAMASHINA, Yukiko

TACHIBANA, Kyôko AOYAMA, Shôhei YAMAMOTO

1979, Nikkatsu, colour, 70m.

Oniroku Dan: Rope Makeover

(Dan Oniroku: nawa-geshô)

団鬼六 縄化粧

Cast: Naomi TANI, Aoi NAKAJIMA, Katsuo

YAMADA, Tayori HINATSU, Akira TAKAHASHI

1978, Nikkatsu, colour, 67m.

Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

Uniform Girls: The Fruit Is Ripe

(Seifuku taiken torio: watashi uregoro)

制服体験トリオ わたし熟れごろ

Cast: Rie KITAHARA, Mayumi TERAJIMA, Ayako

ÔTA, Yukiko TACHIBANA

1981, Nikkatsu, colour, 63m.

Yôichi NISHIYAMA

Wet Hot Saké (Nuru nuru kan kan)

Trans. *Slippery and Hot*

ぬるぬる爛爛

Cast: Toshiya FUJITA, Mamoru WATANABE, Yûya

MIURA, Misa JÔNO, Hotaru HAZUKI

1996, Shintocho, colour, 71m.

Availability: Universe (Hong Kong, English / Chinese subtitles)

Sakae NITTA

Moistening Housewife: Pantyless Apron

(Omorashi oku-san nôpan kappôgi)

お漏らし奥さん ノーパン割ぽう着

Cast: Miki ASHIDA, Mai KAWANA

2004, Xces Film, colour, 59m.

Pantyless Tour Conductor: I Want to Handle You

(Nôpan tenjôin: anata o nigiritai)

ノーパン添乗員 あなたを握りたい!

Cast: Mew (a.k.a. Iori NATSUME), Reiko

YAMAGUCHI, Reiko KAGAMI

2004, Xces Film, colour, 60m.



Punishing Home Tutor: Pantyless One-to-One Lessons
(*Oshioki katei kyôshi: nôpan kojîn jugyô*)
お仕置き家庭教師 ノーパン個人授業
Cast: Rio MOCHIZUKI, Kyôko KAZAMA, Yûya MATSUURA, Seiji NAKAMITSU
2004, Xces Film, colour, 61m.

Kinya OGAWA

Beautiful Home Tutor: Well-Rounded Chasm
(*Bijin katei kyôshi: fukuyoka na tanima*)
美人家庭教師 ふくよかな谷間
Cast: Yuka KATÔ, Yûna NAKAZATO, Shôichi YOKOSOKA, Seiji NAKAMITSU, Yasushi TAKEMOTO
2002, OP Eiga, colour, 60m.

Birth and Contraception
(*Osan to hinin*)
お産と避妊
Cast: unknown
1969, Ôkura Eiga, part colour, 71m.

Blonde Porno Madness
(*Kinpatsu poruno-kyô*)
金髪ポルノ狂
Cast: Debbie Monroe (a.k.a. Debbie Morrow), Robert Brown, Miki HAYASHI, Jun YOSHIDA
1972, Ôkura Eiga, part colour, 69m.

Carnal Desire Ghost Story: Beautiful Flesh Numb Fuck
(*Inyoku kaidan: bi-niku hame-shibare*)
淫欲怪談 美肉ハメしびれ
Cast: Shôko MIKAMI, Aya MIZUKI, Mio KAMISHIMA, Yuka KATÔ, Seiji NAKAMITSU
2004, OP Eiga, colour, 60m.

The Case of the Lusty Living Head
(*Iki-kubi jôchi jiken*)
生首情痴事件
Cast: Hachirô TSURUOKA, Kozue KASHIMA, Junko TAKATSUKI, Yuri IZUMI
1967, Ôkura Eiga, part colour, 72m.
Availability: Happy Net Pictures
(Japan, no subtitles), part of Ôkura Kaidan Sakuhin box set with *Ghost Story: Dismembered Phantom* and *Okinawa Hanging Phantom Ghost Story*

Desires of an Abnormal Man
(*Yokubô no ijôsha*)
欲望の異常者
Cast: Kyôko ÔGIMACHI, Momoyo ÔHARA, Kôji SATOMI, Kôji KOKONOE
1966, Ôkura Eiga, B/W, unknown

Female, Female, Female
(*Mesu mesu mesu*)
雌・メス・牝
Cast: unknown
1964, Ôkura Eiga, B/W, unknown

Forbidden Garden
(*Joshi daisei no kinjirareta hanazono*)
Trans. *College Girl's Forbidden Garden*
女子大生の禁じられた花園
Cast: Yôko HIKARI, Naomi TANI, Kôji SATOMI, Sanpei NAWA, Hiroshi IZUMIDA, Hachirô TSURUOKA, Kôji KOKONOE
1967, Ôkura Eiga, colour, 71m.
(directed as Kazuhisa OGAWA)

Ghost Story: Dismembered Phantom
(*Kaidan bara bara yûrei*)
怪談バラバラ幽霊
Cast: Reiko AKIGAWA, Miki HAYASHI, Setsu SHIMIZU, Hachirô TSURUOKA
1968, Ôkura Eiga, part colour, 71m.
Availability: Happy Net Pictures (Japan, no subtitles), part of Ôkura Kaidan Sakuhin box set with *Case of the Lusty Living Head* and *Okinawa Hanging Phantom Ghost Story*

Independent Glamour Corps
(*Dokuritsu guramâ butai*)
独立グラマー部隊
Cast: Kyôko ÔGIMACHI, Keiko TACHIBANA
1964, Kokuei, B/W, 86m.

Menses and Pregnancy (Seiri to ninshin)
生理と妊娠
Cast: Keiko TACHIBANA
1968, Ôkura Eiga, part colour, 71m.

Mistress (Mekake)
妾
Cast: Yasuko MATSUI (as Kazuko MAKI), Kôji KOKONOE, Jôji ÔHARA
1964, Kokuei, part colour, 79m.

Molester Father-in-Law: Molested New Wife Mischief
(*Chikan gifu: shin-zuma o itazura*)
痴漢義父 新妻をいたずら
Cast: Aya MIZUKI, Mami OGAWA, Yukari MASAKI, Seiji NAKAMITSU
2004, OP Eiga, colour, 59m.

Mystical 48 Positions: Pillow-Picture Woman
(*Higi yonjû-hachi te: makura-e no onna*)
秘技四十八手 枕絵のおんな
Cast: Ayaka FUJIZAKI, Aya MIZUSHIMAKAWA, Kinichi KUSUMI, Makoto SUGIMOTO
1994, Ôkura Eiga, colour, 60m.
(directed as Kazuhisa OGAWA)

New Ghost Story Heretical Lust: O-Iwa's Vengeful Ghost
(*Shin kaidan shikiyoku gedô: o-iwa no onryô Yotsuya kaidan*)
新怪談色欲外道 お岩の怨霊四谷怪談
Cast: Kôju RAN, Shinko JÔ, Yuki MINAMI
1976, Ôkura Eiga, part colour, 89m.

Queen Bee Promiscuity (Joô-bachi rankô)
女王蜂乱交
Cast: Kaoru MIYA, Miki HAYASHI, Hachirô TSURUOKA, Jun KITAMURA
1969, Ôkura Eiga, part colour, 71m.

Sensual Apartment: Secret Room
(*Kôshoku manshon: maru-hi mitsu*)
好色マンション (秘) 室
Cast: Miki HAYASHI, Kôji SATOMI, Kôji KOKONOE
1968, Ôkura Eiga, colour, 70m.

Sex Beast King and the Female Hordes
(*mesu-gun to seijûô*)
牝群と性獣王
Cast: Debbie Monroe, Michiyo MAKÔ
1975, Ôkura Eiga, colour, 70m.

Sex Frenzy of a Blonde
(*Burondo musume no shoku-kurui*)
ブロンド娘の色狂い
Cast: Debbie Monroe, Yuri IZUMI, Miki HAYASHI
1972, Ôkura Eiga, part colour, 69m.

Sex Manual of the Human Race
(*Jinrui no seiten*)
人類の性典
Cast: unknown
1973, Ôkura Eiga, colour, unknown
(directed as Takahiro OGAWA)

Kyôko ÔGIMACHI

Yakuza Geisha
やくざ芸者
Cast: Miharû SHIMA, Kaoru MIYA, Yôko SAEGUSA
1965, Century Eiga-sha, B/W, 70m.

Kôyû OHARA

Catholic Nun Lucia: Disgraced
(*Shûdôjo Rushia: kegasu*)
修道女ルシア 辱くけがす
Cast: Yuki NOHIRA, Rumi TAMA, Tamaki KATSURA, Rei OKAMOTO
1978, Nikkatsu, colour, 78m.
Availability: Geneon
(Japan, no subtitles)

Catholic Nun: Wet Rope Confession
(*Shûdôjo nure nawa zange*)
Alt. *Wet Rope*
修道女 濡れ縄ざんげ
Cast: Yuki NOHIRA, Miyako YAMAGUCHI, Yutaka HAYASHI, Yûko AKANE, Yuki YOSHIZAWA
1979, Nikkatsu, colour, 69m.
Availability: Japan Shock
(Netherlands, English/German subtitles)

Chinal Scandal: Exotic Dance
(*Chaina sukyandaru: inbu*)
チャイナスキャンダル 艶舞
Cast: Emi SHINDÔ, Kaoru ODA, Ri Ri CHIN
1983, NCP-Golden Harvest / Nikkatsu, colour, 74m.

Continuation True Story of a Woman's Detention Centre
(*Zoku jitsuroku onna kanbetsu-jo*)
続実録おんな鑑別所
Cast: Hitomi KOZUE, Mihoko ARIKAWA, Kumi NATSUKI, Machiko AOKI
1975, Nikkatsu, colour, 70m.

Fairy in a Cage
(*Ori no naka no yousei*)
檻の中の妖精
Cast: Naomi TANI, Kazuo SATAKE, Hirokazu INOUE, Rei OKAMOTO, Reika MAKI
1977, Nikkatsu, colour, 70m.

Goldfinger: One More Time Inside
(*Gôrudofuigâ: mô ichi-do oku made*)
ゴールドフィンガー もう一度奥まで
Cast: Junko ASAHINA, Asami OGAWA, Yuka KOIZUMI, Kazuyo EZAKI
1983, Nikkatsu, colour, 64m.



Lady Momoko's Adventure
(*Momoko fujin no bôken*)

桃子夫人の冒険

Cast: Akiko HYÛGA, Yôko AZUSA, Masahiro YOSHIHARA, Kenji SHIMAMURA, Tamaki KOMIYAMA, Oniroku DAN
1979, Nikkatsu, colour, 68m.

New: True Story of a Woman's Detention Centre: Love Hell

(*Shin: jitsuroku onna kanbetsu-jo: koi-goku*)

新・実録おんな鑑別所 —恋獄—

Cast: Hitomi KOZUE, Yuri YAMASHINA, Naomi OKA, Hajime TANIMOTO, Yuki MINAMI

1976, Nikkatsu, colour, 67m.

Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

Oh! Takarazuka

OH! タカラズカ

Cast: Jun MIHÔ, Norimasa FUKU, Sumi TAMAGAWA, Kazuyo EZAKI, Kaori OKAMOTO, Ayako ÔTA, Yôko MORIMURA, Mizuho NAKAGAWA

1982, Nikkatsu, colour, 69m.

Pink Hip Classmates: Lying in Wait

(*Momojiri dôkyûsei: machibuse*)

桃尻同級生 まちぶせ

Cast: Mayumi TERASHIMA, Ayako ÔTA, Rika TAKAHARA, Yôko MORIMURA

1982, Nikkatsu, colour, 70m.

Pink Hip Girl

(*Momojiri musume: pinku hippu gârû*)

桃尻娘 ピンク・ヒップ・ガール

Cast: Kahori TAKEDA, Ako (2), Jun TAKAHASHI, Yûji NOGAMI, Yûko KATAGIRI, Yûya UCHIDA
1978, Nikkatsu, colour, 87m.

Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

Pink Hip Girl: Love Attack

(*Momojiri musume: rabu atakku*)

桃尻娘 ラブアタック

Cast: Kahori TAKEDA, Ako (2), Yôko KURITA, Jun TAKAHASHI, Etsuko HARA, Hôsei KOMATSU, Osamu HASHIMOTO

1979, Nikkatsu, colour, 91m.

Pink Hip Girl: Marriage Proposal Epic War

(*Momojiri musume: puropôzu daisakusen*)

桃尻娘 プロポーズ大作戦

Cast: Kahori TAKEDA, Ako (2), Yôko KURITA, Jun TAKAHASHI, Eiko NAGASHIMA, Takashi SHIKAUCHI, Miyuki TANIGAWA

1980, Nikkatsu, colour, 88m.

Rope Hell

(*Nawa jigoku*)

縄地獄

Cast: Naomi TANI, Nami AOKI, Hirokazu INOUE, Yoshie KITSUDA

1978, Nikkatsu, colour, 69m.

Runa's Confession: The Men Who Flocked Around Me

(*Runa no kokuhaku: watashi ni muragatta otoko-tachi*)

ルナの告白 私に群がった男たち

Cast: Runa TAKAMURA, Rumi TAMA, Shin NAKAMARU, Naomi OKA, Mami YÛKI

1976, Nikkatsu, colour, 67m.

True Story of a Woman Condemned

(*Jitsuroku onna kanbetsu-jo: sei-jigoku*)

Trans. *True Story of a Woman's Detention Centre: Sex Hell*

実録おんな鑑別所 性地獄

Cast: Hitomi KOZUE, Meika SERI, Maya HIROMI, Machiko AOKI, Tatsuya HAMAGUCHI

1975, Nikkatsu, colour, 72m.



White Rose Campus: And Then Everyone Gets Raped

(*Shirobara gakuken: soshite zenin okasareta*)

白薔薇学園 そして全員犯された

Cast: Nami MISAKI, Ayako ÔTA, Mayo MIYAMOTO, Mika YAMAJI, Waka ODA, Yûichi MINATO

1982, Nikkatsu, colour, 70m.

Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

Hiroyuki ÔKI

Ball Play

(*Tama asobi*)

たまあそび

Cast: Yasusuke HASHIGUCHI, Masakuni ISHIBASHI, Yasuhisa KIYOOKA, Hotaru HAZUKI

1996, ENK, colour, 60m.

I Like You, I Like You Very Much

(*Anata ga suki desu, daisuki desu*)

あなたがすきです、だいすきです



Cast: CHANO, Kazunori SHIBUYA, Taka NISHIMOTO, Hisanori KITAKAZE, Yôji TANAKA
1994, ENK, colour, 58m.

Availability: Water Bearer Films (US, English subtitles), Bryce (Japan, no subtitles)

Tears of Ecstasy

(*Ekusutashii no namida*)

エクスタシーの涙

Cast: Tomoki TAGUCHI, Akiko ÔSUGI, Hotaru HAZUKI, Kiyomi ITÔ

1995, Kokuei, colour, 62m.

Isao OKISHIMA

New Jack and Betty (Nyû jakku & beti)

ニュージャック & ベティ

Cast: Kôhei TSUZAKI, Tamaki KATORI

1969, Wakamatsu Pro, part colour, 72m.

Availability: Hummingbird (Japan, no subtitles)

VHS, Ace Deuce (Japan, no subtitles)

Hideko OKIYAMA

A Woman Like a Grapefruit: Everyday Sexual Chaos
(*Gurêpufurutsu no yô na onna: seiran no hibi*)

グレープフルーツのような女 性乱の日々

Cast: Rie KITAHARA, Yôji MINE, Rumi TAMA

1981, Pro Taka, colour, 61m.

Toshio OKUWAKI

Naked Pursuit

(*Kôfun*)

昂奮

Cast: Masayoshi NOGAMI, Mari AOKI

1968, World Eiga, part colour, 73m.

Availability: Asterix Home Entertainment (US, English subtitles)

Rapturous Sex

(*Yorokobi no sekkusu*)

歓びのセックス

Cast: Michiyo MAKU, Risa MINAKAMI, Kôju RAN, Rika KOYANAGI

1968, World Eiga, colour, unknown

Sexual Violence

(*Sei no bôryoku*)

性の暴力

Cast: Eiko IZUMI, Ranko TSUKASA, Hiroshi IZUMIDA, Keizô FUYUKI

1968, World Eiga, part colour, 40m.

Yoshiki ONODA

Cannibal Ama (Hitogui ama)

人喰海女

Cast: Yôko MIHARA, Ken UTSUI, Utako MITSUYA, Tetsurô TANBA, Masayo BANRI

1958, Shintoho, B/W, 74m.

Nagisa ÔSHIMA

In the Realm of the Senses

(*Ai no korîda*)

Alt. *L'empire des sens,*

Empire of the Senses,

The Realm of the Senses

愛のコリーダ

Cast: Eiko MATSUDA, Tatsuya FUJI, Aoi NAKAJIMA, Meika SERI, Hiroko FUJI, Taiji TONUYAMA, Naomi SHIRAIISHI, Yuriko AZUMA, Machiko AOKI, Kiyomi YASUDA, Yasuko MATSUI, Kôji KOKONOE

1976, Ôshima Production – Argos Films / Toho (Japan distr.), colour, 104m.

Availability:

Nouveaux Pictures (UK, English subtitles),

Fox Lorber (US, English subtitles)

Yôichi SAI

Sexual Crime

(*Seiteki hanzai*)

性的犯罪

Cast: Yuki KAZAMATSURI, Lucia SANTÔ, Sabu KAWAHARA, Makoto MINO

1983, Nikkatsu, colour, 77m.

Futoshi SAKAMOTO

The Temptation of White Skin: Russian Widow
(*Shiroi hada no yûwaku: Roshia no mibôjin*)

白い肌の誘惑 ロシア未亡人

Cast: Natascha Tagirov, Keiko SETO, Kyôko KAZAMA, Osamu TANPOPO, Tomohiro OKADA

2004, Film House / Xces Film, colour, 61m.

Rei SAKAMOTO

Futamata

Trans. *Two-Timing*

ふ・た・ま・た

Orig. *Blissful Two-Timing: Gushing Love Juice*
(*Monzetsu futamata: nagarederu aieki*)

悶絶ふたまた 流れ出る愛液

Cast: Kyôko NATSUME, Yûichi ISHIKAWA,
Minami AOYAMA, Ako (1), Masako KISHIDA,
Takeshi ITÔ, Mutsuo YOSHIOKA, Kiyomi ITÔ
2005, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 65m.

Harbour Town Married Woman: While You Were Out Fishing...

(*Minatomachi no hitozuma: anata ga ryô ni deteru ma ni*)

港町の人妻 あなたが漁に出てる間に

Orig. *Voluptuous Beauty: Wanna Do It Desperately!*

(*Hôman bijo: shitakute tamaranai!*)

豊満美女 したくて堪らない!

Vid. *Erotic Travel Story: Harbour Town Married Woman: While You Were Out Fishing...*

(*Kannô ryojô roman: minatomachi no hitozuma: anata ga ryô ni deteru ma ni*)

官能旅情ロマン 港町の人妻 あなたが漁に出てる間に

Cast: Mio NISHINO, Yûichi ISHIKAWA, Yôta KAWASE, Rika, Ako (1), Daisuke IJIMA, Toshiya UENO, Shinji IMAOKA, Teiichi HORI
2003, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 64m.

Availability: Inter Film (Japan, no subtitles) VHS

3 Balls, 1 Strike

Orig. *Sex Friend Nurezakari*

(*Sekkusu furendo: nurezakari*)

Trans. *Sex Friend: Wet Season*

セックス・フレンド 濡れざかり

Cast: Tetsuji SAWA, Kinako SATÔ, Kuniyuki SAKAI, Kiyomi ITÔ, Takeshi ITÔ
1999, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 65m.

Availability: Screen Edge (UK, English subtitles)

21st Century Girl

Orig. *18 Year-Old: Aching Within the Underwear*

(*18-sai: shitagi no naka no uzugi*)

18才 下着の中のうずき

Vid. *cide Mail Friend*

(*Rensa jisatsu meru-tomo*)

連鎖自殺 メル友

Cast: Rina SASAHARA, Yôta KAWASE, Akira KUDÔ, Hitomi YAMAZAKI, Atsuko SUZUKI

2001, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 62m.

Availability: Video Maker (Japan, no subtitles)

Sakô SAKAWA

Night Mischief (Yoru no itarazu)

夜のいたずら

Cast: Keiko TACHIBANA, Keizô FUYUKI, Kimiko ASUKA

1965, Century Eiga-sha, B/W, 77m.

Sweden Porno: Blonde Animal

(*Suêden poruno: kinpatsu animaru*)

スエーデン・ポルノ 金髪アニマル

Cast: unknown

1972, Nikkatsu, colour, 63m.

Sweden Porno: Forest of Beastly Desire

(*Suêden poruno: jûyoku no mori*)

スエーデン・ポルノ 獣欲の森

Cast: unknown

1971, Nikkatsu, colour, 72m.

Tease of the Pillow (Makura no itarazu)

まくらの悪戯

Cast: Rumi TAMA, Kazuko SHIRAKAWA, Yuri NAKAO, Masayoshi NOGAMI, Kôhei TSUZAKI
1969, Roppô Eiga, colour, 78m.

Moe SAKURA

Married Wife Adultery Foolishness: Mother-in-Law, Widow, Cheating Wife

(*Hitozuma furin chitai: giba • mibô • furin-zuma*)

人妻不倫痴態 義母・未亡人・不倫妻

Cast: Satomi SHINOZAKI, Masahisa SHIRATO, Mami OGAWA, Moe SAKURA, Tomohiro OKADA
2001, Film House / Xces Film, colour, 61m.

Note: 3-part film directed with Satomi SHINOZAKI and Mami OGAWA. Each actress stars in their own section.

Mature Women Teasers: Debauchery Training

(*Ijimeru jukujo: inran chôkyô*)

いじめる熟女たち 淫乱調教

Cast: Ryôko WASHI, Mako SHÔMI, Atsuko SUZUKI, Kyôko KAZAMA
2002, Film House / Xces Film, colour, 60m.

Kazuhiro SANO

Break on Through

Orig. *Youthful Bliss: Hello Christian*

(*Seishun no monzetsu: konnichiwa kurisuchan*)

性春の悶絶 こんにちはクリスチャン

Cast: Kazuhiro SANO, Kozue AOKI, Natsuko SAWADA, Kô KAJINO, Naoto YOSHIMOTO, Yumika HAYASHI
1995, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 63m.

Destroy the Evil

(*Hakaiseyo, shûaku naru mono o*)

破壊せよ、醜悪なるものを

Orig. *Married Woman Masturbation: Delicious Numbness (Hitozuma ONANIE: umai shibare)*

人妻ONANIE 甘い痺れ

Cast: Kazuhiro SANO, Kanako KISHI, Tarô ARAKI, Shinobu KAWANA, Mami OGAWA, Takahiko KOBAYASHI
1990, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 61m.

Don't Let It Bring You Down

Orig. *Pervert: Telephone Masturbation*

(*Hentai: terehon onanie*)

変態テレフォンONANIE

Cast: Kazuhiro SANO, Kanako KISHI, Kô KAJINO, Kyôko TAKAGI, Kôzô UEDA, Kôhei TSUZAKI, Kôichi IMAIZUMI, Ryôma SANO, Gensuke SANO
1993, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 60m.
Availability: Uplink (Japan, no subtitles)

Last Bullet (Saigo no dangan)

最後の弾丸

Orig. *Confinement: Obscene Foreplay*

(*Kankin: waisetsu na zengi*)

監禁 ワイセツな前戯

Cast: Kazuhiro SANO, Kanako KISHI, Junko ISHII, Chinatsu MINAMINO, Tarô ARAKI
1989, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 59m.

Ode to the Earthworm

(*Mimizu no uta*)

ミミズのうた

Cast: Kazuhiro SANO, Kazuo KOMIZU, Maria SATSUKI, Yoshihiko MATSUI
1982, unknown, colour, 80m.

Owl's Summer

(*Fukurô no natsu*)

ふくろうの夏

Orig. *Guts of a Mature Woman: Crimson Cleft*
(*Jukujo no harawata: shinku no sakeme*)

熟女のはらわた 真紅の裂け目

Cast: Kazuhiro SANO, Myû ASÔ, Shôichi SHIRATO, Shôko KUDÔ, Yumi YOSHIYUKI, Kenichi KANBE
1997, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 60m.

Under the Carp Banner

(*Koinobori hatameku shita ni*)

鯉のぼり旗めく下に

Orig. *Molester Obscene Peeping*

(*Chikan waisetsu nozoki*)

痴漢わいせつ覗き

Cast: Kazuhiro SANO, Kanako KISHI, Tarô ARAKI, Naoto YOSHIMOTO, Takahiko KOBAYASHI
1992, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 55m.

Availability: Artsmagic (US, English subtitles)

The Woman Who Clings

(*Shigamitsuku onna*)

しがみつく女

Orig. *Molester Masturbation Peeping*

(*Chikan: waisetsu nozoki*)

痴漢ONANIE覗き

Cast: Mizuho NAKAGAWA, Kazuhiro SANO, Kanako KISHI, Takahiko KOBAYASHI, Kô KAJINO, Kôichi IMAIZUMI
1992, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 60m.

Tadashi SASAKI

Campus Porno: Pierrot's Tits

(*Kyanpasu poruno: Piero no nyûbô*)

キャンパス・ポルノ ピエロの乳房

Cast: Yuriko YAMAMOTO, Hiroshi NIKAI DÔ, Masayoshi NOGAMI
1974, Prima Kikaku / Nikkatsu, colour, 65m.

Hisayasu SATÔ

Angel in the Dark

Orig. *Raw Real Performance: Drink Up*

(*Nama honban: nomihosu*)

ナマ本番 飲み干す!

Cast: Yuri ISHIHARA, Kôichi IMAIZUMI, Yumika HAYASHI, Satoe MIZUSHIMA, Hiroyuki KAWASAKI

1993, Shishi Pro / Xces Film, colour, 61m.

The Bedroom

Orig. *An Aria on Gazes*

(*Shisen-jô no aria*)

視線上のアリア

Orig. *Promiscuous Wife: Disgraceful Torture*
(*Uwaki-zuma: chijoku zeme*)

浮気妻 恥辱責め

Cast: Kiyomi ITÔ, Takeshi ITÔ, Momoka ASANO, Mineo SUGIURA, Kyôko NAKAMURA, Issei SAGAWA, Taketoshi WATARI, Kôichi IMAIZUMI
1992, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 64m.
Availability: Screen Edge (UK, English subtitles)



Birthday (Tanjôbi)

誕生日

Orig. *Molester Train: Dirty Deeds (Chikan densha: iyarashii kô)*

痴漢電車 いやらしい行為

Cast: Yumika HAYASHI, Kôichi IMAIZUMI, Kiyomi ITÔ, Yuri ISHIHARA, Hiroyuki KAWASAKI
1993, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 54m.

(directed as Hisakazu HATA)

Distorted Sense of Touch (Kurutta shokukaku)

狂った触角

Orig. *Violent Love! Secret Lolita Hunting (Gekiai! Rorita mitsuryô)*

激愛! ロリータ密猟

Cast: Kiyomi ITÔ, Taketoshi WATARI, Naomi HAGIO, Shirô SHIMOMOTO, Yûichi MINATO, Yutaka IKEJIMA, Bunmei TOBAYAMA
1985, Shishi Pro / Toei Central Films, colour, 63m.



The Fetist: Hot Breath (Fetisuto: atsui toiki)

フェティスト 熱い吐息

Cast: Yoshihisa NEMOTO, Yûichi ARAKI, Yôji TANAKA, Kunio MASAOKA

1998, ENK, colour, 65m.
Availability: Bryce (Japan, no subtitles)

Fuga Music for Alpha and Beta (Alpha to beta no fûga)

αとβのフーガ

Orig. *Pervert Ward: SM Clinic (Hentai byôtô: SM shinryo-shitsu)*

変態病棟 SM診療室

Cast: Kazuhiro SANO, Kiyomi ITÔ
1989, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 54m.

Hunter's Sense of Touch (Karyudo-tachi no shokkaku)

狩人たちの触覚

Cast: Naoto YOSHIMOTO, Takeshi ITÔ, Kiyomi ITÔ, Yôji TANAKA, Kimitake HIRAOKA, Hiroyuki KAWASAKI

1995, ENK, colour, 65m.
Availability: Bryce (Japan, no subtitles)



Intoxication Game (Tôsui yûgi)

陶酔遊戯

Cast: Shôtârô SAWADA, Takahiko KOBAYASHI, Tôru MATSUMURA, Ryûji YAMAMOTO
1989, ENK, colour, 60m.

Kyrie Eleison

Orig. (Raw) *Wiretapping Report: Sex Talk*

((Nama) tôchô repôto: chiwa)

(生) 盗聴レポート 痴話

Cast: Kiyomi ITÔ, Takeshi ITÔ, Mako, Kôichi IMAIZUMI, Mineo SUGIURA, Momoka ASANO
1993, Shintocho, colour, 60m.

Labyrinth of Primary Colours (Genshoku no meikyû)

原色の迷宮

Orig. *Human Torture: Three-Grade Punishment (Ningen gômon: sandan zeme)*

人間拷問 三段責め

RR. Married Woman Debauchery Training: Stimulating Torment

(Hitozuma inran chôkyô: itaburu shigeki)

人妻淫乱調教 いたぶる刺激

Cast: Rio SERIZAWA, Yuri HIME, Kyôko NAKAMURA, Mineo SUGIURA, Kôichi IMAIZUMI, Yutaka IKEJIMA
1992, Shishi Pro / Xces Film, colour, 58m.

Love-Zero=Infinity

Orig. *Dirty Wife: Getting Wet*

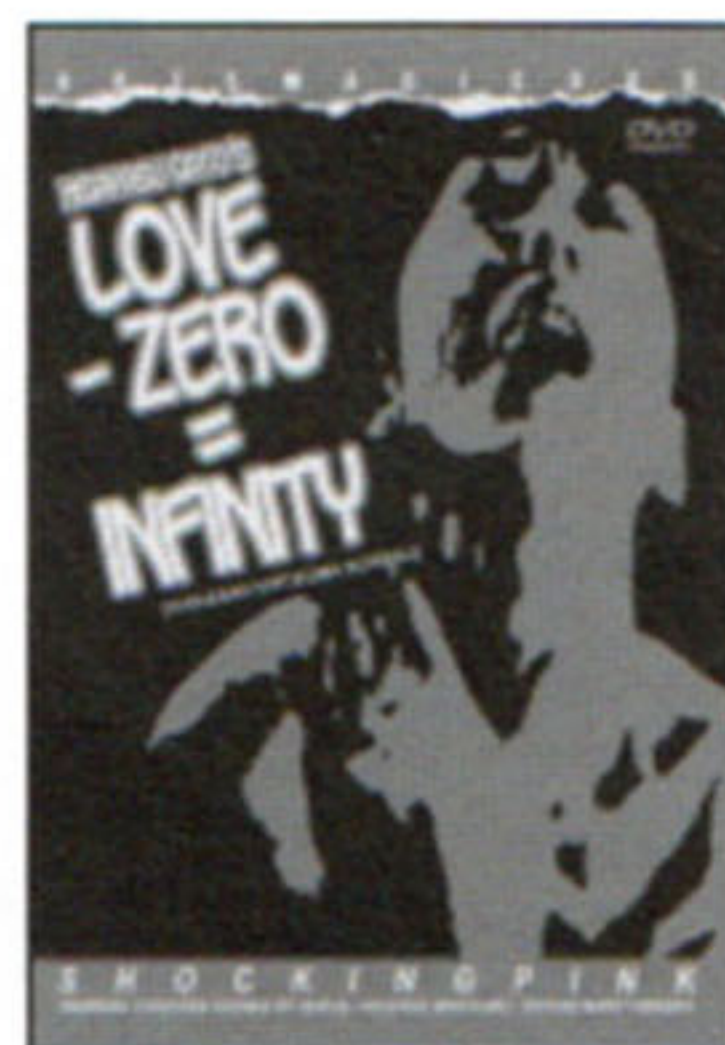
(Iyarashii hitozuma: nureru)

いやらしい人妻

濡れる

Cast: Kiyomi ITÔ, Takeshi ITÔ, Ryûmei HOMURA, Kôichi IMAIZUMI, Shirô SHIMOMOTO, Hiroyuki KAWASAKI
1994, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 63m.
(directed as Hisakazu HATA)

Availability: Artsmagic (US, English subtitles)



Lustmord

Orig. *Genuine Assault*

(Bôkô honban)

暴行本番

Cast: Nanako FUJITANI, Narutoshi ISHIKAWA, Kiyomi ITÔ, Yui HOSHIKAWA, Asami YÛKI, Bunmei TOBAYAMA, Yutaka IKEJIMA
1987, Shishi Pro / Shintocho, colour, 57m.

Muscle

Lunar Eclipse Theatre

(Gesshoku eiga-kan)

月蝕映画館

Orig. *Mad Ballroom*

(Kurutta butô-kai)

狂った舞踏会

Vid. *The Madness Night*

Cast: Takeshi ITÔ, Shimon KUMAI, Kiyomi ITÔ

1989, Shishi Pro / ENK, colour, 60m.
Availability: Strand Releasing (US, English subtitles) VHS

Poaching by the Water's Edge

(Mitsuryô no migiwa)

密猟の汀

Orig. *Horse and*

Woman and Dog

(Uma to onna to inu)

馬と女と犬

Cast: Kanako KISHI, Kazuhiro SANO, Yuri SASAKI, Emi UEHARA, Takahiko KOBAYASHI
1990, Media Up / Shintocho, colour, 58m.

Rafureshia

Orig. *Slut Wife: While*

Husband's Away

(Sukebe tsuma: otto no rusu ni)

すけべ妻 夫の留守に

Cast: Kinako, Yumi YOSHIYUKI, Kiyomi ITÔ, Kôichi IMAIZUMI, Hiroyuki KAWASAKI, Takahiko KOBAYASHI, Taketoshi WATARI, Mitsuru MEIKE
1995, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 63m.

Availability: Artsmagic (US, English subtitles)



RE-WIND

Orig. *Abnormal: Dark Tyranny*

(Abunômaru: Ingyaku)

アブノーマル 陰虐

Cast: Kiyomi ITÔ, Reika KAZAMI, Kazuhiro SANO, Sayaka HITOMI
1988, Shishi Pro / Shintocho, colour, 64m.

Rotten Town

(Kusatta machi)

腐った町

Orig. *Wife Collector (Hitozuma korekutâ)*

人妻コレクター

Cast: Minako OGAWA, Isao NONAKA, Naomi HAGIO, Yutaka IKEJIMA
1985, Shishi Pro / Nikkatsu, colour, 63m.

The Secret Garden

(Himitsu no hanazono)

秘密の花園

Orig. *Lolita Vibrator Torture*

(Rorita baibu-zeme)

ロリータ・バイブ責め

Cast: Sayaka KIMURA, Takeshi ITÔ, Rio YANAGAWA, Kiyomi ITÔ, Yutaka IKEJIMA, Taketoshi WATARI
1987, Shishi Pro / Nikkatsu, colour, 63m.
Availability: Uplink (Japan, no subtitles)



Silencer Made of Glass

Orig. *Lesbian Rape:*

Sweet Honey Juice (Rezubian reipu: umai mitsujiru)

レズビアンレイプ 甘い蜜汁

Cast: Rei TAKAKI, Emi SUGIMOTO, Kôichi IMAIZUMI, Aya MIZUSHIMAKAWA
1991, Shishi Pro / Shintocho, colour, 59m.

Soft Skin

(Yawarakai hada)

やわらかい肌

Cast: Moeko EZAWA, Hitoshi KUSANAGI, Hiromi KURONUMA, Kenji MIZUHASHI, Junko ASAHINA
1998, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 87m.

Survey Map of a Paradise Lost

(Shitsurakuen sokuryô chizu)

失樂園測量地図

Orig. *Hard Focus: Wiretapping*

(Hâdo fôkasu: nusumigiki)

ハードフォーカス 盗聴くぬすみぎき

Cast: Rio YANAGAWA, Kiyomi ITÔ, Kazuhiro SANO, Yutaka IKEJIMA
1988, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 64m.
Availability: Artsmagic (US, English subtitles)

Temptation of a Mask

(Kamen no yûwaku)

仮面の誘惑

Cast: Kazuhiro SANO, Kiyoshi USUDA, Naomi HAGIO, Yutaka IKEJIMA
1987, Shishi Pro / ENK, colour, 68m.
Availability: Bryce (Japan, no subtitles)



TURTLE VISION

Orig. *Hidden Camera Report: Sleazy Pictures*

(*Tôatsu ripôto: insha*)

盗撮リポート 陰写!

Vid. *High-School Girls Next Door: Selling Themselves and Peeping* (*Tonari no joshi kôsei: uri to nozoki*)

となりの女子高生 ウリと覗き

Cast: Rei TAKAKI, Naomi SUGISHITA, Miki FUKATA, Kiyomi ITÔ, Taketoshi WATARI, Yutaka IKEJIMA, Kôichi IMAIZUMI

1991, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 60m.

WAVE

Orig. *The Lady of the Stable*

(*Umagoya no reijô*)

馬小舎の令嬢

Cast: Yukinojô, Rie ASAI, Mineo SUGIURA, Kôichi IMAIZUMI, Takahiko KOBAYASHI

1991, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 58m.

Welcome to the Illusion

(*Maboroshi e yôkoso*)

幻へようこそ

Orig. *Sisters Serial Rape: Scoop Out!*

(*Shimai renzoku reipu: eguru!*)

姉妹連続レイプ えぐる!

Cast: Marino FUJISAWA, Reika KAZAMI, Narutoshi ISHIKAWA, Taketoshi WATARI, Kiyomi ITÔ

1989, Shishi Pro / Xces Film, colour, 65m.

Osamu SATÔ

Hard Lesbian: Quick and Deep

(*Hâdo rezubian: kuikku & diipu*)

ハードレズビアン クイック&ディープ

Vid. *Shell Joining, Pervert Woman and Office Lady* (*Kai-awase, chijo to OL*)

貝あわせ、痴女とOL

Cast: Kyôko KAZAMA, Nancy (Nanshi), Kyôko HAYAMI, Mariko KOBAYASHI, Kikujirô HONDA

2005, Shintoho, colour, 63m.

Availability: Interfilm (Japan, no subtitles)

Nurse Sisters: Pink Consulting Room

(*Nâsu shimai: momo-iro shinsatsu-shitsu*)

ナース姉妹 桃色診察室

Vid. *Sister Nurses: Night Consulting Room*

(*Shimai kangofu: yoru no shinsatsu-shitsu*)

姉妹看護婦 夜の診察室

Cast: Yumeka SASAKI, Nikki SASAKI, Miyuki KONNO, Nobuyuki MATSUDA, Kikujirô HONDA, Seiji NAKAMITSU

2003, Shintoho, colour, 63m.

Availability: Interfilm (Japan, no subtitles)

Toshiki SATÔ

Abnormal Ecstasy

(*Abunômaru ekusutashii*)

アブノーマル・エクスタシー

Cast: Mineo SUGIURA, Mio ASAKURA, Yasunori ETÔ, Mai ITÔ, Saki KURIHARA, Kaoru YAMASHINA, Daikei SHIMIZU, Kikujirô HONDA

1991, Outcast Produce / Shintoho, colour, 53m.

Availability: Under Ground Films (Japan, no subtitles) VHS



Adultery Diary: One More Time While I'm Still Wet

(*Furin nikki: nureta mama mô ichidô*)

不倫日記 濡れたままもう一度

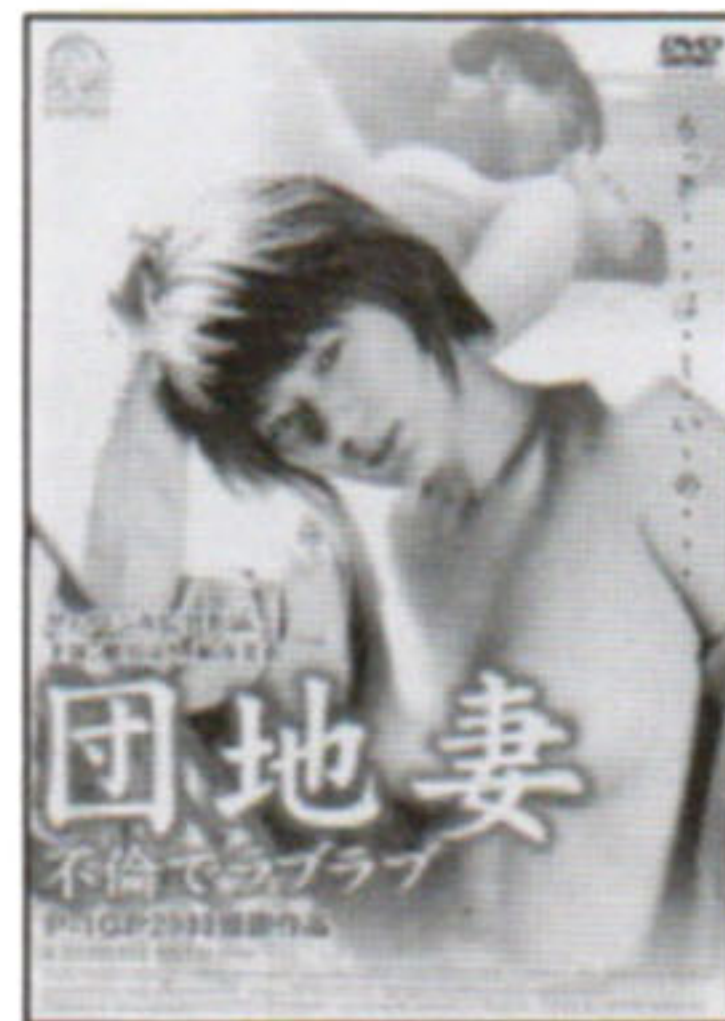
Cast: Hotaru HAZUKI, Kazuhiro SANO, Takeshi ITÔ, Yukiko IZUMI, Takahiko KOBAYASHI

1996, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 59m.

Availability: Broadway (Japan, no subtitles)

Apartment Wife:

Adulterous Passion



(Japan, no subtitles)

Apartment Wife: Midday Adultery

(*Danchi-zuma: hakuchû no furin*)

団地妻 白昼の不倫

Vid. *Apartment Wife Pleasure Picture Book: Three Person Sex Club*

(*Danchi-zuma kairaku zukan: Sannin no sei kurabe*)

団地妻快楽図鑑 3人の性くらべ

Cast: Hotaru HAZUKI, Natsuko SAWADA, Yôko CHÔSOKABE, Yôta KAWASE, Kikujirô HONDA

1997, Shintoho, colour, 65m.

Availability: Interfilm (Japan, no subtitles)

Blue Sky (Aozora)

青空

Orig. *Endless Lust: Heat Me Up!*

(*Hate shinai yokujô: mowasete!*)

果てしない欲情 もえさせて!

Vid. *Blue Sky: Serial Desire and Murder*

(*Aozora: renzoku suru yokubô to satsui*)

青空 連続する欲望と殺意

Cast: Shingo MUKAI, Yuki YOKOHAMA, Yôta KAWASE, Mariko NAKA, Shirô SHIMOMOTO, Kiyomi ITÔ

2001, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 65m.

Availability: Broadway (Japan, no subtitles)

Dream Woman (Yume no onna)

夢の女

Beast (Kedamono)

獣 けだもの

Cast: Tôru NAKANE, Mayu ASABUKI, Kiyomi ITÔ, Daikei SHIMIZU, Kyôko NAKAMURA

1989, Burst Brain Products / Shintoho, colour, 60m.

Availability: Eve (Japan, no subtitles) VHS



(*Danchi-zuma: furin de rabu rabu*)

団地妻 不倫でラブ

Cast: Yumika HAYASHI, Yuki YOKOHAMA, Takeshi ITÔ, Kikujirô HONDA, Kinako SATÔ, Yôta KAWASE

2000, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 68m.

Availability: Broadway

Empty Room (Akibeya)

空き部屋

Orig. *Apartment Wife: Moans from Next Door*

(*Danchi-zuma: tonari no aegi*)

団地妻 隣のあえぎ

Cast: Mao NAKAGAWA, Takeshi ITÔ, Yûji TAJIRI, Yumeka SASAKI, Tsukasa SAITÔ

2001, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 69m.

Availability: Salvation (UK, English subtitles), Broadway (Japan, no subtitles)



The Lost Virgin

(*Rosuto bâjini: yamitsuki enjo kôsai*)

Trans. *Lost Virgin: Resigned to Paid Dating*

ロスト・ヴァージン やみつき援助交際

Vid. *Handcuffs (Tejô)*

手錠

Cast: Nikki SASAKI, Daiji MATSUNAGA, Chika SAITÔ, Asami SAKURA, Kikujirô HONDA, Tetsuaki MATSUE

2002, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 71m.

Availability: Salvation (UK, English subtitles)

Naomi

Orig. *Petting Lesbians: Erogenous Zone*

(*Pettingu rezu: seikantai*)

ペッティング・レズ 性感帯

Cast: Yumika HAYASHI, Mineo SUGIURA, Kazuhiro SANO, Yumi YOSHIYUKI

1993, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 55m.

Availability: Uplink (Japan, no subtitles)

New Apartment Wife: Adultery Is the Taste of Honey (Only for Tonight...)

(*Shin danchi-zuma: furin wa mitsu no aji (koyoi kagiri wa...)*)

新・団地妻 不倫は蜜の味 (今宵かぎりは...)

Cast: Hotaru HAZUKI, Kikujirô HONDA, Natsuko SAWADA

1999, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 68m.

Simple Story

(*Tanjin na hanashi*)

単純な話

Orig. *Adulterous Wife's Sex: Pleasure Hunting* (*Furin-zuma no sei: kairaku asari*)

不倫妻の性 快楽あさり

Cast: Kanako KISHI, Saki KURIHARA, Mineo SUGIURA, Yasunori ETÔ, Tôru NAKANE, Daikei SHIMIZU

1992, Outcast Produce /

Shintoho, colour, 59m.

Availability: Uplink (Japan, no subtitles)



Tandem

Orig. *Molester Train Married Woman Edition: Wife Is a Pervert*

(*Chikan densha hitozuma-hen: okusama wa chijo*)

痴漢電車人妻篇 奥様は痴女

Cast: Daikei SHIMIZU, Hotaru HAZUKI, Maya ÔGI

1994, Shintoho, colour, 59m.

Availability: Screen Edge (UK, English subtitles)

Note: A reel appears to be missing from the Screen Edge DVD release.



That's Hentai-tainment: Abnormal SEX Complete Works

(Zatsu hentai-teinmento: ijô SEX taizen-shû)
ザッス変態テインメント 異常SEX大全集

1991, Outcast Produce / Shintocho, colour, 58m.
Note: "Greatest hits" compendium of pink film clips directed along with Takao Nakano and Toshiya Ueno.

Woman of the House: Going to the Class Reunion (Danchi no okusan: dôsôkai ni iku)

団地の奥さん、同窓会に行く

Vid. *Class Reunion (Dôsôkai)*

同窓会

Cast: Yumeka SASAKI, Yôta KAWASE, Shingo MUKAI, Kyôko KAZAMA, Takahiko KOBAYASHI, Shirô SHIMOMOTO, Daikei SHIMIZU, Mitsuru MEIKE, Takeshi ITÔ

2004, Kokuei / Shintocho, colour, 63m.

Availability: Interfilm (Japan, no subtitles)

Maria SATSUKI

Perverted Young Wife Torture (Hentai wakazuma-zeme)

変態若妻責め

Cast: Yuka ASAGIRI, Usagi ASÔ, Mika HIJIRI
1983, Million Film, colour, 61m.

Single Girl: Finger for a Lonely Night (Shinguru gâru: hitori-ne no yubi)

シングルガール ひとり寝の指

Cast: Tamae KOBAYASHI, Usagi ASÔ, Kei OGAWA

1984, Million Film, colour, 57m.

Kôji SEKI

Cave of Lust (Jôyoku no dôkutsu)

情欲の洞窟

Cast: Aki EMA (as Minami NUMAJIRI)
1963, Kokuei, B/W, unknown

Conduct: Pregnancy / Abortion (Kô: ninshin / chûzetsu)

行為・妊娠／中絶

Cast: unknown
1973, Kokuei, unknown, unknown

House of Blind Lust (Chijô no ie)

痴情の家

Cast: Miyoko KUROIWA, Keiko TACHIBANA
1964, Kokuei, B/W, 79m.

Molester Invisible Man (Chikan tômei ningen)

痴漢透明人間

Cast: Yuzuru ICHIMURA, Sanae SHIBA, Kayoko SUGI
1977, Shintocho, colour, 62m.

Special (Supesharu)

スペシャル

Cast: Rika KOYANAGI, Naomi TANI, Noriko TATSUMI, Reiko ÔTSUKI
1967, Shin Nihon Eiga / Kokuei, part colour, unknown

Valley of Lust (Jôyoku no tanima)

情欲の洞窟

Cast: Kazuko MINE
1963, Kokuei, B/W, unknown

Ikuo SEKIMOTO

Oniroku Dan: Rope Torture (Dan Oniroku: nawazeme)

団鬼六 縄責め

Cast: Mika TAKAKURA, Kaori TAKAHASHI, Kazuyuki SENBA, Hajime INOUE
1984, Nikkatsu, colour, 71m.
Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

Tamizô SHIBUYA

Dirty Company Executive (Ecchi jûyaku)

エッチ重役

Cast: Akemi KAGAWA
1965, Cine Unimonde / Meikô Select
unknown, 67m.

Satoshi SHIMOMOTO

Beautiful Stewardess: Beautiful Stewardess:

Don't Get Your Uniform Dirty

(Bijin suchuwâdesu: seifuku o yokosanaide...)

美人スチュワーデス 制服を汚さないで
...

Cast: Yukari SAKURADA, Kyôko KAZAMA, Motoko SASAKI
2002, Xces Film, colour, 60m.

Availability: Interfilm
(Japan, no subtitles)

Lesbian Mother-in-Law: Son Exchange (Gibo rezu: musuko kôkan)

義母レズ 息子交換

Cast: Kyôko HASHIMOTO, Motoko SASAKI, Satomi SHINOZAKI, Azusa SAKAI
2003, Xces Film, colour, 60m.

Toshio SHIMURA

The Girl Diver

Trembles in Fear

(Ama no senritsu)

Alt. *Shudder of the Ama*

海女の戦慄

Cast: Michiko MAEDA, Ryûtarô AMAGI, Utako MITSUYA, Masayo BANRI
1957, Shintocho, B/W, 73m.

Availability: Imagica (Japan, no subtitles)

Revenge of the Pearl Queen

(Onna shinju-ô no fukushû)



女真珠王の復讐

Cast: Michiko MAEDA, Masako FUJIMURA, Ken UTSUI, Utako MITSUYA, Tetsurô TANBA, Shigeru AMACHI
1956, Shintocho, B/W, 89m.
Availability: Imagica (Japan, no subtitles)

Takae SHINDÔ

Abortion Surgery (Chuzetsu shujutsu)

中絶手術

Cast: Tomoko IIDA, Mari KOJIMA, Yûko HAMA, Yuki HIROSE, Yûichi MINATO
1969, Seinen Bijutsu Eikyô / Kantô Movie, colour, 66m.

Blue Assault: Abnormal Experience Document (Aoi bôkô: ijô taiken hakusho)

青い暴行 異常体験白書

Cast: Yukari EJIMA, Takahiro ÔHIRA, Nami KAWAMURA
1967, Kokuei, part colour, 67m.
Availability: Hummingbird (Japan, no subtitles)
VHS

Childbirth: Special Sex Habits Story (Bunben: ishoku sei-fûzoku-shi)

分娩 異色性風俗史

Cast: Mari AOKI, Yôko MIZUSAKI, Paul, Reiko ÔTSUKI
1968, Seinen Geijutsu Eiga Kyôkai / Kantô Movie, part colour, 73m.

Dreadful Schoolgirls: The First Term of Puberty (Osorubeki joshi gakusei: shishunki zenki)

恐るべき女子学生 思春期前期

Cast: Mitsuko MIURA, Miyoko KUROIWA, Jirô ARIKAWA
1964, Nihon Cinema, B/W, 88m.

Nobuaki SHIRAI

Catholic Nun: Aching Within Black Robes (Shûdôjo: kokue no naka no uzuki)

修道女 黒衣の中のうずき

Cast: Eri KANUMA, Yukie ISHII, Rie AKAGI
1980, Nikkatsu, colour, 67m.

Women's Prison (Onna keimusho)

おんな刑務所

Cast: Erina MIYAI, Natsuko YASHIRO, Tôru IBUKI, Yukiko TACHIBANA, Tayori HINATSU
1978, Nikkatsu, colour, 70m.

Shinichi SHIRATORI

Clam-Diving Ama (Shiofuki ama)

潮吹き海女

Cast: Akiko HYÛGA, Akio KANEDA, Hiroshi GOJÔ, Yûko ASUKA, Yuki YOSHIZAWA
1979, Nikkatsu, colour, 69m.
Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

I Can Feel It (Kanjirun desu)

感じるんです

Cast: Jun IZUMI, Yû MIZUSHIRO, Moeko EZAWA, Hidetoshi KAGEYAMA, Rei OKAMOTO
1976, Nikkatsu, colour, 71m.

Shinji SÔMAI

Love Hotel (Rabû hoteru)

ラブホテル

Cast: Noriko HAYAMI, Minori TERADA, Rie NAKAGAWA, Kiriko SHIMIZU, Nobutaka MASATOMI
1985, Director's Company / Nikkatsu, colour, 88m.

Chûsei SONE

Adultery

(*Furin*)

不倫

Cast: Miyuki KOJIMA, Kazuyo EZAKI, Shô RYÛZANJI, Sanshō SHINSUI

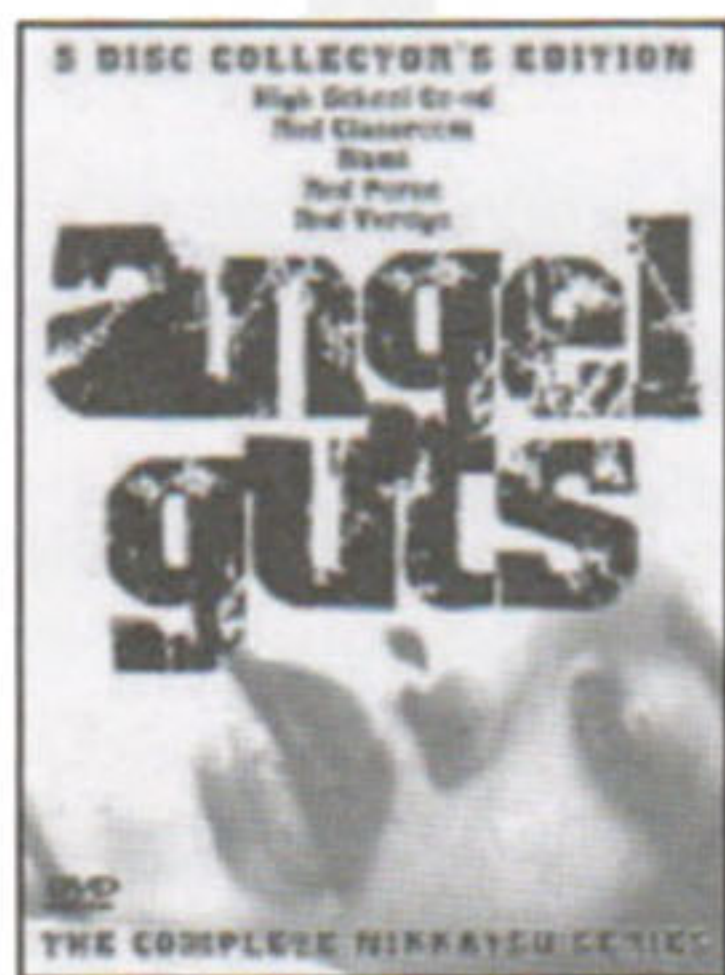
1986, ENK / Nikkatsu, colour, 80m.



Angel Guts:

Red Classroom

(*Tenshi no harawata: akai kyôshitsu*)



天使のはらわた
赤い教室

Cast: Yûki MIZUHARA, Keizô KANIE, Jun AKI, Minako MIZUSHIMA, Ryôichi KUSANAGI

1979, Nikkatsu, colour, 79m.
Availability: Artsmagic (US, English subtitles)

Foreign Mistress Oman: Fallen Equinox Flowers

(*Rashamen Oman: higanbana wa chitta*)

らしゃめんお万 彼岸花は散った

Cast: Sally MAY, Miki HAYASHI, Yuri YAMASHINA, Sôichirô MAENO, Akira TAKAHASHI, Hiroshi GOJÔ, Keiko MAKI, Akemi YAMAGUCHI

1972, Nikkatsu, colour, 63m.

Foreign Mistress

Oman: Rainy Holland Slope

(*Rashamen Oman: ame no oranda-zaka*)

らしゃめんお万
雨のオランダ坂

Cast: Sally MAY, Shûsaku MUTÔ, Miki HAYASHI, Atsushi YAMATOYA, Kôsuke HISAMATSU, Kenji SHIMAMURA, Yuri YAMASHINA

1972, Nikkatsu, colour, 67m.

Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)



High School Coed: Angel Guts

(*Jokôsei: tenshi no harawata*)

女高生 天使のはらわた

Cast: Sanshō SHINSUI, Megu KAWASHIMA, Machiko ÔTANI, Kenji KASAI, Tokuko WATANABE, Maya KUDÔ

1978, Nikkatsu, colour, 79m.

Availability: Artsmagic (US, English subtitles)

Immortal Love

(*Seidan botan dôrô*)

Alt. *Hellish Love*

Trans. *Erotic Tale of Peonies and Lanterns*

性談牡丹燈籠

Cast: Setsuko OGAWA, Hidemi HARA, Miki HAYASHI, Hajime TANIMOTO

1972, Nikkatsu, colour, 67m.

Availability: Hanzibar Films (UK, English subtitles)

Lusty Sisters

(*Shikijô shimai*)

色情姉妹

Cast: Akemi NIJÔ, Keiko TSUZUKI, Chizuyu AZAMI, Chigusa TAKAYAMA, Kenji SHIMAMURA, Nobutaka MASATOMI, Hiroyuki MIKAWA

1972, Nikkatsu, colour, 73m.

Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)



Sensual History: Female Artist of the Floating World

(*Irogoyomi onna ukiyo-eshi*)

色暦女浮世絵師

Cast: Setsuko OGAWA, Mutsuo FUKUSHIMA, Midori MORI, Sôichirô MAENO

1971, Nikkatsu, colour, 66m.

Sigh

(*Tameike*)

ためいき

Cast: Yumiko TADENO, Aoi NAKAJIMA, Yuri YAMASHINA, Masakazu KUWAYAMA

1973, Nikkatsu, colour, 81m.



Tattoo

(*Irezumi*)

刺青 IREZUMI



Cast: Sakiko ITÔ, Kazumi SAWADA, Ryô KINOMOTO, Issei NEGISHI

1984, Nikkatsu, colour, 77m.

True Story Kazuko Shirakawa: Naked Resumé

(*Jitsuroku kazuko shirakawa: hadaka no rirekisho*)

実録白川和子
裸の履歴書

Cast: Kazuko SHIRAKAWA, Taiji TONUYAMA, Hiroshi GOJÔ, Toshihiko ODA, Hidetoshi KAGEYAMA, Akira TAKAHASHI, Hajime TANIMOTO, Mari TANAKA, Setsuko OGAWA, Yûko KATAGIRI, Junko MIYASHITA, Yuri YAMASHINA, Masumi JUN, Keiko TSUZUKI, Miyoko AOYAMA, Hidemi HARA, Akemi NIJÔ

1973, Nikkatsu, colour, 77m.

Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)



Twilight Tribe

(*Yugure zoku*)

夕ぐれ族

Cast: Yasuko HARA, Chieko MATSUMOTO, Keizô KANIE, Natsuko YAMAMOTO, Naoto TAKENAKA

1984, Nikkatsu, colour, 96m.

Virgin Courtesan

Orig. *Secret Woman Market*

(*Maruhi jorô shijô*)

Alt. *Secret Chronicle: Prostitution Market*

(秘) 女郎市場

Cast: Yûko KATAGIRI, Nobutaka MASATOMI, Hiroshi GOJÔ, Akemi YAMAGUCHI, Chigusa TAKAYAMA, Shinko JÔ, Hijiri ABE

1972, Nikkatsu, colour, 70m.

Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

Keiko SORBONNE

The Gays in Wonderland

See listing under Kiyomi ITÔ

Akiyoshi SUGIURA

Slave Sex: My Plaything

(*Dorei seiai: watashi no omocha*)

奴隷性愛 私のおもちゃ

Cast: Madoka MATSUBA, Yuka KATÔ, Hotaru HAZUKI, Yûya ISHIKAWA

2003, OP Eiga, colour, 61m.

Masayuki SUÔ

Abnormal Family: Older Brother's Bride

(*Hentai kazoku: aniki no yome-san*)

変態家族兄貴の嫁さん

Cast: Kaoru KAZE, Mika YAMAJI, Usagi ASÔ, Ren ÔSUGI, Kei SHUTÔ, Shirô SHIMOMOTO

1984, Kokuei / Shinto, colour, 62m.

Availability: Uplink (Japan, no subtitles), Asia Video (HK, English/Chinese subtitles) VCD



Akihiro SUZUKI

Pleasure Garden of Angels

(*Tenshi no rakuen*)

天使の楽園

Cast: Kôichi IMAIZUMI, Hiroyuki ÔKI, Hotaru HAZUKI, Akihiro SUZUKI

1999, PISS FACTORY / ENK, colour, 63m.

Junichi SUZUKI

Red Rope: Until Exhaustion

(*Akai nawa: hateru made*)

赤い縄 〜果てるまで〜

Cast: Kanako KISHI, Mizuho NAKAGAWA, Rina HAYASHI, Masahiko ABE

1987, Nikkatsu, colour, 68m.

Women in Heat Behind Bars

(*Ori no naka no hoshigaru onna-tachi*)

檻の中の欲しがる女たち

Cast: Shinobu WAKANA, Reiko YADA, Saeko KIZUKI, Tomomi SEGAWA

1987, Nikkatsu, colour, 68m.

Norifumi SUZUKI

The Insatiable

(Tokugawa sekkusu kinshi-rei: shikijô daimyo)

Alt. *The Erotomaniac Daimyo, Shogunate's Harem*

Trans. *Tokugawa Sex Prohibition: The Lusty Daimyo*

徳川セックス禁止令 色情大名

Cast: Miki SUGIMOTO, Hiroshi NAWA, Yôko

MIHARA, Sandra Jullien, Ruriko IKEJIMA,

Miwako ONAYA, Fumio WATANABE

1972, Toei, colour, 62m.

Modern-Day Porno Legend: Hereditary Harlot

(Gendai poruno-den: sentensei inpu)

現代ポルノ伝 先天性淫婦

Cast: Reiko IKE, Yôko MIHARA, Sandra Jullien,

Ruriko IKEJIMA, Fumio WATANABE

1971, Toei, colour, 62m.

School of the Holy Beast

(Seijû gakuen)

聖獣学園

Cast: Yumi TAKIGAWA, Emiko YAMAUCHI, Fumio

WATANABE, Yayoi WATANABE, Aya ÔTANI, Emi JÔ

1974, Toei, colour, 91m.

Availability: Cult Epics (US, English subtitles)

Sex and Fury

(Furyô ane goten: Inonoshika Ochô)

Trans. *Delinquent Elder Sister Legend: Ochô*

Inonoshika

不良姐御伝 猪の鹿お蝶

Cast: Reiko IKE, Akemi NEGISHI, Ryôko EMA,

Yôko HORI, Naomi OKA, Hiroshi NAWA,

Christina Lindberg

1973, Toei, colour, 88m.

Availability: Panik House (US, English subtitles)

Star of David: Beautiful Girl Hunter

(Dabide no hoshi: bishôjo-gari)

Alt. *Beautiful Girl Hunter*

墮靡泥の星 美少女狩り

Cast: Hiromi NAMINO, Shun DOMON, Natsuko

YASHIRO, Yûko ASUKA, Asami OGAWA,

Hiroshi NAWA, Shôhei YAMAMOTO, Nagatoshi

SAKAMOTO, Toshihiko ODA, Akiko HYÛGA, Yuka

ASAGIRI, Rei OKAMOTO, Bunta SUGAWARA

1979, Nikkatsu, colour, 100m.

Availability: Japan Shock (Netherlands, English/

German subtitles)

Yûji TAJIRI

Convulsions

(Keiren)

痙攣 けいれん

Orig. *Loose Lips: Convulsions* (Midara na

kuchibiru: keiren)

淫らな唇 痙攣

Cast: Yumeka SASAKI, Mikiya SANADA,

Masahiko HORI

2004, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 64m.

Availability: Interfilm (Japan, no subtitles)

Dizzy

(Memai)

眩暈

Orig. *Adulterous Wife: Dizzy*

(Furin suru hitozuma: memai)

不倫する人妻 眩暈

Cast: Yumeka SASAKI, Kazuhiro SANO, Masataka

MATSUBARA, Yuriko AKIKAWA, Mariko NAKA

2002, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 66m.

Go Go Train: Screw, Make Me Come, Don't Stop

(Ike ike densha: hamete, ikasete, yamenaide)

イケイケ電車 ハメて、行かせて、やめないで！

Cast: Mari ASAKURA, Kazumi IKEDA, Secchin

KAWAYA, Kiyomi ITÔ

1997, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 65m.

Loose Woman: Getting Wet At Noon

(Fushidara na onna: mahiru ni nureru)

ふしだらな女 真昼に濡れ

Cast: Daiji MATSUNAGA, Akebi FUTSUMOTO,

Kazuhiro SANO, Mari YAMAGUCHI, Yûya

MATSUURA

2006, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 60m.

No Love Juice: Rustling in Bed

(Fuwa-fuwa to beddo no ue de)

Alt. *Love Juice / Rustling in Bed*

ふわふわとベッドの上で

Orig. *OL Love Juice* (OL no aijiru: rabu jyûsu)

OLの愛汁 ラブジュース

Vid. *Working Big Sis': Can't Hold Herself Back*

After 5

(Hataraku onê-san: Afutâ 5 wa gaman dekinai)

はたらくお姉様 アフター5は我慢でき

ない

Cast: Atsumi KUBOTA, Mikio SATÔ, Yumika

HAYASHI, Yûji SAWAYAMA

1999, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 58m.

Availability: Screen Edge (UK, English subtitles)

OL Sisters: I Want to Sleep with You

(Shimai OL: itakishimetai)

姉妹OL 抱きしめたい

Cast: Etsuko KANAI, Mao NAKAGAWA, Kôju RAN,

Takahiro NOMURA, Takeshi ITÔ, Mikio SATÔ

2001, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 65m.

Availability: Uplink (Japan, no subtitles)

Pantyless Molester Train: I Saw It!

(Nôpan chikan densha: miechatta!!)

ノーパン痴漢電車 見えちゃった！！

Cast: Mikio SATÔ, Sanae IKETANI, Hitomi

YAMAZAKI, Mariko NAKA

2000, Shintoho, colour,

64m.

The Strange Saga of

Hiroshi The Freeloading

Sex Machine

(Freeloading Hiroshi)

ヒモのヒロシ

Orig. *Sex Machine:*

Season of Obscenity

(SEX mashin: hiwai na

kisetsu)

S E Xマシン 卑猥な季節

Cast: Mutsuo YOSHIOKA, Rinako HIRASAWA,

Kazuhiro SANO, Minami AOYAMA, Yûya

MATSUURA, Takeshi ITÔ, Takahiko KOBAYASHI

2005, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 64m.

Availability: Salvation (UK, English subtitles),

Rapid Eye Movies (Germany, German subtitles/

dialogue)



Yôichi TAKABAYASHI

Naomi

ナオミ

Cast: Yûki MIZUHARA, Makoto SAITÔ, Ai MORI,

Kyôko NAMI

1980, Toei, colour, 104m.

Hidekazu TAKAHARA

Uniform Beauty: Shag Me Teacher!

(Seifuku bishôjo: sensei atashi o daite)

制服美少女 先生あたしを抱いて

Cast: Aoi SORA

2004, Shintoho, colour, 60m.

Banmei TAKAHASHI

Japanese Torture (Nihon no gômon)

日本の拷問

Alt. *Japan Torture Chronicles* (Nihon gômon-shi)

日本拷問史

Cast: Mayuko HINO, Kumiko ARAKI, Mariko

KITAZAWA, Yûichi MINATO, Masayoshi NOGAMI

1978, Shintoho, colour, 61m.

New Love in Tokyo (Ai no shin-sekai)

Trans. *New World of Love*

Alt. *Tokyo Decadence 2, Le Nouveau Monde*

Amoureux, Topaz 2

愛の新世界

Cast: Sawa SUZUKI,

Reiko KATAOKA,

Tomorrow TAGUCHI,

Aya SUGIMOTO, Shô

AIKAWA, Nobuyoshi

ARAKI

1994, Toei, colour,

115m.

Availability: Animeigo

(US, English subtitles)



Nip in the Bud

(Tsubomi o korosu)

蕾を殺る

Cast: Shirô SHIMOMOTO, Mako KITANO

1977, Shintoho, colour, 60m.

Rape Escape Crime (Fujo bôkô dassô-han)

婦女暴行脱走犯

Cast: Junko MIYASHITA, Yasuko MATSUI, Shinko

JÔ, Mami SAKURA, Takeshi SHIMA

1972, Aoi Eiga, part colour, 68m.



That Female Teacher:

Tightly Bound

(Aru onna kyôshi:

kinbaku)

ある女教師 緊縛

Cast: Naomi OKA,

Shirô SHIMOMOTO

1978, Shintoho,

colour, 62m.

Tightly Bound Sacrifice

(Kinpaku ikenie)

緊縛いけにえ

Cast: Mami YÛKI,

Hitomi KAWAI, Rima AONO, Ren ÔSUGI

1980, Shintoho, colour, 62m.

Tetsuji TAKECHI

Black Snow (Kuroi yuki)

黒い雪

Cast: Chitose KURENAI, Kotobuki

HANANOMOTO, Chieko MURATA, Yasuko

MATSUI, Takako UCHIDA

1965, Daisan Pro / Nikkatsu, B/W, 88m.

Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

Daydream
(*Hakujitsumu*)
白日夢

Cast: Kanako MICHI, Akira ISHIHAMA, Chôjûrô HANAKAWA, Yasuko MATSUI
1964, Daisan Pro, part colour, 92m.
Availability: Something Weird (US, English subtitles) VHS, Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

Daydream
(*Hakujitsumu*)
白日夢

Cast: Kyôko AIZOME, Kei SATÔ, Takemi KATSUSHIKA, Sae KAWAGUCHI
1981, Takechi Pro / Fuji Eiga, colour, 110m.
Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

Daydream 2
(*Hakujitsumu 2*)
Alt. *Captured for Sex*
白昼夢 2

Cast: Kyôko AIZOME, Chizu KIRINAMI
1987, Global, colour, 110m.
Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

Dream of the Red Chamber
(*Kôkeimu*)
紅閨夢

Cast: Sennojô SHIGEYAMA, Hideko KAWAGUCHI, Mina YANAGI, Chiyo AOI, Hidenobu KAWAGUCHI
1964, Daisan Pro / Shochiku, colour, 75m.

Floating World Cruelty Story
(*Ukiyo-e zangoku monogatari*)
浮世絵残酷物語

Cast: Noriko TATSUMI, Juri KAIMEI, Ryûji INAZUMI
1968, Takechi Pro / Daiei, colour, 84m.

Madam Scandal
(*Sukyandaru fujin*)
スキャンダル夫人
Alt. *Madam Bidet's Lover*
(*Bide fujin no koibito*)
ビデ夫人の恋人

Cast: Junko NISHITANI, Michiko SAKYÔ, Tôzô YAMAMOTO, Ichirô ARAKI
1973, Daisan Pro / NCC, colour, 78m.

Oiran
華魁

Cast: Takako SHINNÔZUKA, Satoshi MASHIBA, Midori YÛZAKI, Kozue AZUSA, Takashi ITÔ
1983, Takechi Pro, colour, 103m.
Availability: Ocean Shores (HK, Chinese subtitles, Mandarin/Cantonese/Japanese dialogue)

Post-War Cruel Story
(*Sengo zankoku monogatari*)
戦後残酷物語

Cast: Kanako MICHI, Chitose KURENAI, Masako ARISAWA
1968, Takechi Pro / Daiei, B/W, 87m.

The Saint of Mount Koya
(*Kôya hijiri*)
Alt. *Sacred Koya*
高野聖

Cast: Hanako GODAIGO, Taiji TONUYAMA
1983, unknown, colour, 87m.
Note: Released in Guam only. No official Japanese release

Tale of Genji (*Genji monogatari*)
源氏物語

Cast: Kotobuki HANANOMOTO, Ruriko ASAOA, Izumi ASHIKAWA, Chôjûrô HANAKAWA
1966, Genji Eiga-sha / Shochiku, colour, 111m.
Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

Women...Oh Women!
(*Nihon no yoru: onna onna onna monogatari*)
日本の夜 女・女・女物語

Cast: unknown
1963, Sano Geijutsu Pro / Shochiku, colour, 76m.

Kazunari TAKEDA

Peeping (*Nozoki*)
のぞき

Cast: Mai INOUE, Jun IZUMI, Makoto MINO, Shinobu TSURUTA, Shôchirô SAKATA
1983, Nikkatsu, colour, 67m.

Yûki TAKEDA

Cruel Passion Drawing (*Zankoku shikijô ezu*)
残酷色情絵図

Cast: Rumi TAMA, Rumi SEGAWA, Misa AOYAMA, Keizô FUYUKI, Hachirô TSURUOKA
1970, Aoi Eiga, part colour, unknown

Forbidden Skin (*Kinjirareta hada*)
禁じられた肌

Cast: Kazuko KANÔ, Rumi TAMA
1965, Cine Pro / Kantô Eihai, B/W, 73m.

Woman Octopus Room (*Onna no tako heya*)
女のたこ部屋

Cast: Noriko TATSUMI, Yûichi MINATO, Reiko ÔTSUKI, Noriko CHIZUKI
1968, Roppô Eiga, part colour, 70m.

Tetsuya TAKEHORA

Love Flavour Udon
(*Aimi udon*)
恋味うどん

Orig. *Fascinating Young Hostess: Sexy Thighs*
(*Nôtsatsu waka-okami: irroppoi koshitsuki*)
悩殺若女将 色っぽい腰つき
Cast: Akiho YOSHIKAWA, Seiji NAKAMITSU, Yûya MATSUURA, Erina AOYAMA, Tôshi YANAGI
2006, OP Eiga, colour, 60m.

PEEP SHOW

Orig. *Married Wife's Secret: Peeping and Peeped At*
(*Hitozuma no himitsu: nozoki nozokare*)
人妻の秘密 覗き覗かれ
Cast: Akiho YOSHIKAWA, Mei SAWAGA, Lemon HANAZAWA, Kyôko KAZAMA, Yasushi TAKEMOTO, Tomohiro OKADA
2004, OP Eiga, colour, 60m.

Short Range (*Flying Fish*)
(*Tankyori TOBI—UO*)
短距離 TOBI—UO

Orig. *Miss Hotel Call Girl: Healing Induction*
ホテル嬢 癒しの手ほどき
Cast: Erina AOYAMA, Yume IMANO, Mari KÔDA, Mutsuo YOSHIOKA, Moe SAKURA
2006, OP Eiga, colour, 60m.

Yôjirô TAKITA

Goodbye Boy (*Gubbai bô*)
グッバイボーイ

Cast: Tatsuya NAGATOMO, Yasuhiro TSUSHIMA, Ren ÔSUGI
1984, ENK, colour, unknown

Molester Bus (*Chikan basu*)
痴漢通勤バス

Cast: Mako TAKIGAWA, Tôru NAKANE, Kyôko HIMEKAWA, Mari HOSHINO, Kyôko AKIYOSHI, Yutaka IKEJIMA, Yukijirô HOTARU
1985, Shishi Pro / Nikkatsu, colour, 62m.

Molester Parcel Delivery
(*Chikan takuhaibin*)
痴漢宅配便

Cast: Mako TAKIGAWA, Kazuko TAKAHARA, Kazumi NATSUKI, Tomomi MATSUDA, Bunmei TOBAYAMA, Yukijirô HOTARU
1986, Shishi Pro / Nikkatsu, colour, 62m.



Molester Train: Absolutely Secret Real Sex
(*Chikan densha: gokuhi honban*)
痴漢電車極秘本番
Cast: Yukijirô HOTARU, Yûka TAKEMURA, Arisa SHINDÔ, Yûko AOKI

1984, Shintocho, colour, 63m.

Molester Train: Keep On Going
(*Chikan densha: motto tsukete*)
痴漢電車 もっと続けて

Vid. *Molester Train: Nice Feeling*
(*Chikan densha: ii kimochi*)
痴漢電車 いい気持ち

Cast: Mika YAMAJI, Ami NAKATORI, Naomi FUJI, Yûichi MINATO, Ren ÔSUGI
1982, Shintocho, colour, 63m.

Molester Train: Momoe's Butt
(*Chikan densha: Momoe no oshiri*)
痴漢電車 百恵のお尻

Vid. *Molester Train: Going Live Now*
(*Chikan densha: tadaima honban-chû*)
痴漢電車 只今本番中

Cast: Momoe YAMAUCHI, Yûka TAKEMURA, Kaoru ORIMOTO, Akihiko KANBARA
1983, Shishi Pro / Shintocho, colour, 64m.



Molester Train: Underwear Inspection
(*Chikan densha: shitagi kensatsu*)
痴漢電車 下着検査

Alt. *Molester Train: Morning Rapture*
(*Chikan densha: asa no tanoshimi*)
痴漢電車 朝の悦しみ

Cast: Yukijirô HOTARU, Yûka TAKEMURA, Kaoru KAZE, Kazumi KIMURA, Naoto TAKENAKA
1984, Shishi Pro / Shintocho, colour, 64m.

Molester Woman Teacher

(Chikan onna kyôshi)

痴漢女教師

Cast: Yûka TAKEMURA, Atsushi IMAIZUMI, Seru RANDÔ

1981, Shishi Pro / Toei Central Films, colour, 63m.



Pink Physical Check-Up
(Momo-iro shintai kensa)

桃色身体検査

Cast: Mako TAKIGAWA, Yukijirô HOTARU, Ren ÔSUGI, Arisa SHINDÔ, Mio SUGIMOTO, Yutaka IKEJIMA

1985, Shishi Pro / Nikkatsu, colour, 63m.

Serial Rape (Renzoku bôkan)

連続暴姦

Cast: Ren ÔSUGI, Kaoru ORIMOTO, Usagi ASÔ, Yûka TAKEMURA, Yukijirô HOTARU

1983, Shishi Pro / Shintoho, colour, 62m.



The Tightly Bound

(Ze kinbaku)

ザ・緊縛

Cast: Serina NISHIKAWA, Yuka TAKASE, Etsuko

AOYAMA, Tôru NAKANE, Hisayasu SATÔ (as Hisakazu HATA), Shûji KATAOKA (as Yasui SHÛCHI)

1984, Shishi Pro / Shintoho, colour, 60m.

Rumi TAMA

Aphrodisiac

(Biyaku)

媚薬

Cast: Anna HIGASHI, Sakurako MOMOI, Kozue AOKI

2002, Anchor Visual Network (V), colour, 61m.

Molester and Divorcee

(Chikan to rikon-zuma)

痴漢と離婚妻

Cast: Kyôko HIBIKI, Kôji MAKIMURA, Megumi AOI, Yutaka IKEJIMA

1985, Pro Taka / Nikkatsu, colour, 61m.

Revenge Sex: Girl Rape

(Fukushû sekkusu: onna ga okasu)

復讐セックス 女が犯す

Cast: Madoka MIZUKI, Masayoshi NOGAMI, Izumi AKI

1981, Million Film, colour, 61m.



Swaying Huge Breasts
103cm

(Yureru kyonyû 103 cm)

揺れる巨乳 103cm

Cast: Miyuki AZUMA, Nana WATASE, Emi UEHARA

1989, Pro Taka / Shintoho, colour, 62m.

Young Wife: SM Confinement

(Waka okusama: SM kankin)

若奥様 SM監禁

Cast: Juri ASAHINA, Kôji MAKIMURA, Mizuho NAKAGAWA

1991, Xces Film, colour, 61m.

Noboru TANAKA

Angel Guts: Nami (Tenshi no harawata: Nami)

天使のはらわた 名美

Cast: Eri KANUMA, Takeo CHII, Miiko SAWAKI, Miyako YAMAGUCHI, Ryôichi KUSANAGI, Minako MIZUSHIMA

1979, Nikkatsu, colour, 98m.

Availability: Artsmagic (US, English subtitles)

Confidential Report: Sex Market

(Maruhi: shikijô mesu ichiba)

Trans. Secret: Lusty Female Market

(秘) 色情めす市場

Cast: Meika SERI, Genshû HANAYAGI, Junko MIYASHITA, Akira TAKAHASHI, Moeko EZAWA

1974, Nikkatsu, part colour, 83m.

Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)



Droplets from a Petal

(Kaben no shizuku)

花弁のしずく

Cast: Rie NAKAGAWA, Gen MITAMURA, Keiko MAKI, Kazuko SHIRAKAWA, Keisuke YUKIOKA, Ryûji ÔIZUMI, Mitsuko AOI, Chieko HARADA

1972, Nikkatsu, colour, 71m.

Lewd Family: Fox and Raccoon

(Kôshoku kazoku: kitsune to tanuki)

好色家族 狐と狸

Cast: Mari TANAKA, Mikiko SAKAI, Chigusa TAKAYAMA, Michiko KOMORI, Hidemi HARA, Akemi YAMAGUCHI

1972, Nikkatsu, colour, 72m.

Midnight Fairy

(Mayonaka no yôsei)

真夜中の妖精

Cast: Yuri YAMASHINA, Morio KAZAMA, Nobutaka MASATOMI, Setsuko ÔYAMA, Masumi JUN, Keisuke YUKIOKA, Mikiko SAKAI, Toshihiko ODA

1973, Nikkatsu, colour, 74m.

Night Train Woman

(Yogisha no onna)

夜汽車の女

Cast: Mari TANAKA, Keiko TSUZUKI, Tomoko KATSURA, Kibaji TANKOBA, Akemi YAMAGUCHI, Keisuke YUKIOKA, Toshihiko ODA

1972, Nikkatsu, colour, 71m.

Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

Private Life of a School

Mistress

(Jokyôshi: shiseikatsu)

Trans. Female Teacher:

Private Life

女教師 私生活

Cast: Ayako ICHIKAWA, Hitomi KOZUE, Morio KAZAMA, Osamu TSURUOKA

1973, Nikkatsu, colour, 74m.



The Sex Life and Escape of Gangster Ando

Noboru

(Andô Noboru no waga tōbô to sex no kiroku)

安藤昇のわが逃亡とSEXの記録

Cast: Noboru ANDÔ, Aoi NAKAJIMA, Maya HIROMI, Renji ISHIBASHI, Moeko EZAWA

1976, Toei, part colour, 76m.

Torture!

(Hakkinbon "bijin ranbu" yori: semeru!)

Trans. From the Banned Book "Wild Dance of a Beautiful Woman": Torture!

発禁本「美人乱舞」より 責める!

Cast: Junko MIYASHITA, Hatsuo YAMAYA, Sumiko MINAMI, Maya KUDÔ, Aoi NAKAJIMA

1977, Nikkatsu, colour, 83m.

Availability: Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

View of the Bud

(Tsubomi no nagame)

蕾の眺め

Cast: Yôko KON, Mitsuru HIRATA, Kôichi SATÔ, Yoshi KATÔ

1986, Eizô Produce / Nikkatsu, colour, 100m.

Watcher in the Attic

(Edogawa rampo ryôki-kan: yaneura no sanpôsha)

Trans. Edogawa Rampo Bizarre Theatre: Stroller in the Attic

江戸川乱歩猟奇館 屋根裏の散歩者

Cast: Junko MIYASHITA, Renji ISHIBASHI, Toshihiko ODA, Tokuko WATANABE, Aoi NAKAJIMA

1976, Nikkatsu, colour, 76m.

Availability:

Hanzibar Films (UK, English subtitles), Geneon (Japan, no subtitles)

A Woman Called Abe Sada

(Jitsuroku Abe Sada)

Alt. The True Story of Sada Abe

実録阿部定

Cast: Junko

MIYASHITA, Hideaki

ESUMI, Genshû

HANAYAGI, Nagatoshi

SAKAMOTO

1975, Nikkatsu, colour, 76m.

Availability:

Image Entertainment (US, English subtitles), Rapid Eye Movies (Germany, German subtitles/dialogue)



Naomi TANI

Sex Killer

(Sei no koroshiya)

性の殺し屋

Cast: Naomi TANI, Shiho CHIGUSA, Shôhei YAMAMOTO

1972, Roppô Eiga, unknown, unknown

Starved Sex Beast

(Ueta injû)

飢えた淫獣

Cast: unknown

1972, unknown, unknown, unknown

Shûji TERAYAMA

Fruits of Passion - The Story of "O" Continued

Alt. *Les fruits de la passion*

Orig. *China Doll (Shina ningyô)*

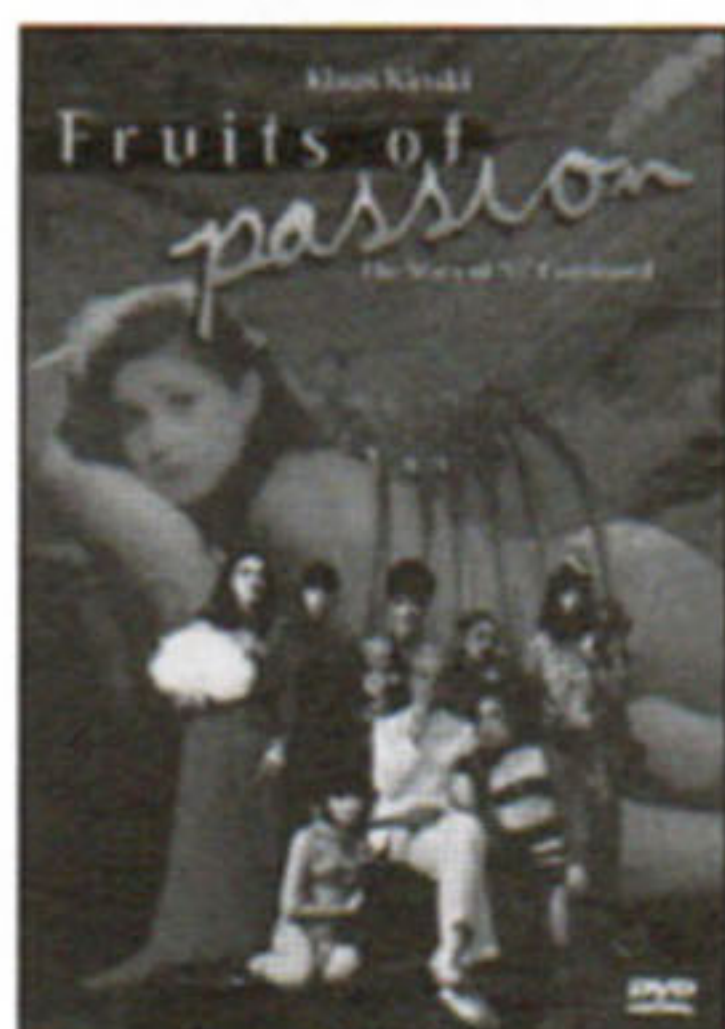
支那人形

Vid. *Shanghai Foreigner's Whorehouse: China Doll (Shanghai ijin shôkan - chaina dôru)*

上海異人娼館 チャイナ・ドール

Cast: Isabelle Illiers, Klaus Kinski, Arielle

Dombasle, Peter,
Keiko NIITAKA, Renji
ISHIBASHI, Takeshi
WAKAMATSU, Yûichi
MINATO, Georges
Wilson
1981, Argos Films /
Toho, colour, 83m.
Availability: Anchor Bay
(US, English subtitles),
Nouveaux Pictures (UK,
English subtitles)



The Grass Labyrinth (Kusa meikyû)

草迷宮

Cast: Hiroshi MIKAMI, Takeshi WAKAMATSU,

Keiko NIITAKA, Jûzô ITAMI, Miho FUKUYA

1978 / 1983, Jinriki hikôki-sha / Toei, colour,
50m.

Availability: Severin (US, English subtitles) as
part of Private Collections

Ken TÔGÔ

*Mansion of Roses: Passion of Men (Bara no
yakata: otoko-tachi no passhon)*

薔薇の館 男達のパッション

Alt. *Mansion of Roses: Homo Passion (Bara no
yakata: homo-tachi no passhon)*

薔薇の館 男男 (ホモ) 達のパッション

Cast: Masayoshi NOGAMI

1983, ENK, colour, unknown

Jirô TSURUMAKI

Soft Skin Penitence (Yawahada zange)

やわ肌ざんげ

Cast: Yukie FUJI, Kyôko HANAMURA, Rika

MIZUSHIRO

1966, Miyanishi Production, B/W, 61m.

Toshiya UENO

Ambiguous (Aimai)

曖昧

Orig. *Obscene Internet Group Make Me Come!!*

(*Waisetsu Netto Shûdan Ikasete!!*)

猥褻ネット集団 いかせて!!

Vid. *Group Suicide: The Last Supper*

(*Shûdan jisatsu: saigo no bansan*)

集団自殺 最期の晩餐

Cast: Hidehisa EBATA,
Noriko MURAYAMA,
Nikki SASAKI, Minami
AOYAMA, Yôta KAWASE
2003, Kokuei / Shintoho,
colour, 63m.

Availability: Salvation
(UK, English subtitles),
Interfilm (Japan, no
subtitles)



The Dragon God and Shurenge

(*Ryûjin to shurenge*)

竜神と朱蓮華

Orig. *Keep on Masturbating: Non-Stop Pleasure*

(*Renzoku onanie: midarepponashi*)

連続ONANIE 乱れっぱなし

Cast: Takeshi ITÔ, Hitomi
AIKAWA, Hotaru HAZUKI,
Shirô SHIMOMOTO,
Kazuhiro SANO

1994, Kokuei / Shintoho,
colour, 55m.

Availability: Uplink

(Japan, no subtitles)



Latest Soap Technique

(*Saishin sôpu tekunikku*)

最新ソープテクニック

Cast: Emi SUGIMOTO, Shôji KOBAYASHI, Minami

MORI, Kinichi KUSUMI

1990, Media Up / Shintoho, colour, 53m.

Sky Blue Crayon

(*Sora-iro no kureyon*)

空色のクレヨン

Orig. *Nurse and Married Woman: The Lustful*

Sister-in-Law

(*Byakui to hitozuma: shitagaru anyome*)

白衣と人妻 したがる兄嫁

Cast: Hidehisa EBATA, Kikujirô HONDA, Yumeka

SASAKI, Hotaru HAZUKI

1998, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 56m.

Sky Blue Crayon vol.2

(*Sora-iro no kureyon vol.2*)

空色のクレヨン vol.2

Orig. *The Lustful Sister-in-Law 2: Erotic Games*

(*Shitagaru anyome 2: midara na tawamure*)

したがる兄嫁 2 淫らな戯れ

Cast: Hidehisa EBATA, Kikujirô HONDA, Hotaru

HAZUKI, Yôko SATOMI, Shingo MUKAI

1999, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 57m.

That's Hentai-tainment (1991)

See listing under Toshiki SATÔ

Kaoru UMEZAWA

Highschool Geisha

(*Jogakusei geisha*)

女学生芸者

Cast: unknown

1972, unknown / Nikkatsu (distr. only),

unknown, unknown

Moan of a Teenager

(*Jû-dai no shingin*)

十代の呻吟

Cast: Mari ISHII, Hideaki SATÔ, Masako NAKA

1965, Kokuei, B/W, 78m.

Smell of Ecstasy

(*Kôkotsu no nioi*)

恍惚の匂い

Cast: Kemi ISHIBOSHI, Shôhei YAMAMOTO, Kô

MATSUURA

1969, Kokuei, unknown, unknown

When Naked Skin Gets Wet

(*Suhada ga nureru toki*)

素肌が濡れるとき

Cast: Yûichi MINATO, Yuri IZUMI

1971, World Eiga, colour, 70m.

Kôji WAKAMATSU

Black Narcissus of Lust

(*Jôyoku no kurozuisen*)

情欲の黒水仙

Cast: Mikio TERAJIMA, Kôhei TSUZAKI,

Mari MUKAI, Masayoshi NOGAMI, Atsushi

YAMATOYA, Masao ADACHI

1967, Wakamatsu Pro, B/W, 76m.

Chronicle of an Affair

(*Jôji no rirekisho*)

情事の履歴書

Cast: Midori CHIGUSA, Yôko SAEGUSA, Mikio

TERAJIMA, Yûzô TACHIKAWA

1965, Kokuei, B/W, 88m.

Availability: Uplink (Japan, no subtitles)

Confidential High Schoolgirl: Part-Time Ecstasy Work
(*Maruhi joshi kôsei: kôkotsu no arubaito*)

(秘) 女子高生 恍惚のアルバイト

Cast: Miyuki HAYAKAWA, Hiroshi IMAIZUMI,

Michiyo MAKO, Ken YOSHIZAWA

1972, Wakamatsu Pro / Toei, colour, 45m.

Continuing Japan Assault Dark History: Tyrant

(*Zoku nihon bôkô ankokushi: bôgyakuma*)

続日本暴行暗黒史 暴虐魔

Cast: Osamu YAMASHITA, Miki HAYASHI

1967, Kokuei, part colour, 70m.

Continuation Love Technique: Acts of Love

(*Ai no tekunikku: ai no kôji*)

続・愛のテクニック 愛の行為

Cast: unknown

1971, Wakamatsu Pro, part colour, 70m.

Dry Skin (Kawaita hada)

乾いた肌

Cast: Yukiko MITSUI, Kyôko MIYAMURA, Kôji

SATOMI, Mikio TERAJIMA

1964, Nihon Cinema, B/W, 84m.

Ecstasy of the Angels

(*Tenshi no kôkotsu*)

Alt. *Angelic Orgasm, Orgasm of Angels*

天使の恍惚

Cast: Ken YOSHIZAWA, Yuki ARASA, Rie

YOKOYAMA, Masao ADACHI, Susumu IWABUCHI,

Michio AKIYAMA, Hidekatsu SHIBATA

1972, Wakamatsu Pro / ATG, colour, 90m.

Availability: Image Entertainment (US, English
subtitles)

Note: Two of the reels have been transferred
out of order in the Image DVD release.

The Embryo Hunts in Secret

(*Taiji ga mitsuryô suru toki*)

Alt. *Embryo Goes Poaching, Embryo Goes Hunting*

胎児が密猟する時

Cast: Hatsuo YAMAYA, Miharuru SHIMA

1966, Wakamatsu Pro, B/W, 72m.

Availability: Kinokuniya Shoten (Japan, no
subtitles) as part of Wakamatsu Box Set 4, with
Secret Acts Behind Walls and *Violated Angels*

Eros Eterna (Seibo kannon daibôsetsu)

Alt. *The Emperor's Mother, the Goddess of Mercy
and the Great Bodhisatva*

聖母観音大菩薩

Cast: Eiko MATSUDA, Osamu SAKUDA, Atsuko

ASANO, Keizô KANIE, Eri KANUMA, Renji

ISHIBASHI

1977, Wakamatsu Pro / ATG, colour, 90m.

Films Referenced in Text

Go Go Second Time Virgin

(*Yuke yuke nido-ne shojo*)

ゆけゆけ二度目の処女

Cast: Mimi KOZAKURA, Michio AKIYAMA (as Obake), Yûji AOKI, Arume HANAMURA, Yûko EJIMA, Kôju RAN

1969, Wakamatsu Pro, part colour, 65m.

Availability: Image Entertainment (US, English subtitles)

Hundred Year Torture Chronicle

(*Gômon hyakunen-shi*)

拷問百年史

Cast: Yuki MINAMI, Yukiko MANABE, Keiko ÔHARA, Aoi NAKAJIMA, Hiroshi IMAIZUMI, Jun KOSUGI, Jun YOSHIDA, Masayoshi NOGAMI

1975, Shintocho, colour, 62m.

Japan Assault Dark History: Blood of an Abnormal Man

(*Nihon bôkô ankoku-shi: ijôsha no chi*)

日本暴行暗黒史 異常者の血

Cast: Masayoshi NOGAMI, Keiko YAMAO, Shôhei YAMAMOTO, Shinji KUBO, Hatsuo YAMAYA, Masao ADACHI, Sachiko ICHII

1967, Wakamatsu Pro, part colour, 75m.

Kama Sutra: Love Technique

(*Seikyôiku-sho: Ai no tekunikku*)

Trans. *Sex Education Manual: Love Technique*

性教育書 愛のテクニック

Cast: Eri ASHIKAWA, Hiroshi YAJIMA

1970, Wakamatsu Pro, colour, unknown

Lead Gravestone

(*Namari no bohyô*)

鉛の墓標

Cast: Kahoru TASHIRO, Yôko TSUKIJI, Mikio TERAJIMA, Masayoshi NOGAMI

1964, Kokuei, B/W, 85m.

The Notorious Concubines

(*Kin pei bai*)

金瓶梅

Cast: Tomoko MAYAMA, Jûzô ITAMI, Keiko SAKURAI, Mitsuko TAKARA

1969, Shochiku, colour, 90m.

Availability: Something Weird (US, English dub)

Pornographic Casebook: Sexual Darkness

(*Poruno jikenbo: sei no ankoku*)

ポルノ事件簿 性の暗黒

Cast: Junko MIYASHITA, Chie SHINOHARA

1975, Shintocho, colour, 81m.

Red Crime

(*Akai hankô*)

赤い犯行

Cast: Takuzô KAMIYAMA, Kanako MICHII, Mikio TERAJIMA, Jirô ARIKAWA, Kazuko FUJIMORI

1964, Tôkyô Cinema / Nihon Cinema, B/W, 90m.

Running in Madness, Dying in Love

(*Kyôshôjôshikô*)

狂走情死考

Cast: Yôko MUTÔ, Ken YOSHIZAWA, Hatsuo YAMAYA, Kazuo KOMIZU, Masao ADACHI

1969, Wakamatsu Pro, part colour, 77m.

Availability: Kinokuniya Shoten (Japan, no subtitles) as part of Wakamatsu Box Set 2, with *Violent Virgin* and *Naked Bullet*

Savage Women (Hageshi onna-tachi)

激しい女たち

Cast: Keiko TACHIBANA, Tamaki KATORI, Kiyoshi MIHARA

1963, Kokuei, B/W, 76m.

Secret Acts Behind Walls

(*Kabe no naka no himegoto*)

Alt. *Skeleton in the Closet, Affairs Within Walls*

壁の中の秘事

Cast: Kazuko KANÔ, Hiroko FUJINO, Mikio TERAJIMA, Takao YOSHIZAWA, Masayoshi NOGAMI

1965, Wakamatsu Pro, B/W, 80m.

Availability: Kinokuniya Shoten (Japan, no subtitles) as part of Wakamatsu Box Set 4, with *The Embryo Hunts in Secret* and *Violated Angels*

Secret Flower (Hika)

秘花

Cast: Hiroshi YAJIMA, Ken YOSHIZAWA, Rie YOKOYAMA, Masao ADACHI

1971, Wakamatsu Pro, part colour, 70m.

Sex Cycle: The Woman Who Wants to Die

(*Segura magura: shinitai onna*)

性輪廻 死にたい女

Cast: Nashiko SHIMAE, Hiroshi YAJIMA, Takeshi SHIMA, Tamaki KATORI

1971, Wakamatsu Pro, colour, 72m.

Sex Family (Sei kazoku)

性輪廻 死にたい女

Cast: Tamaki KATORI, Miki HAYASHI, Yôko MUTÔ, Junko MIYASHITA, Jôji ICHIMURA, Hiroshi YAJIMA, Hiroshi IMAIZUMI

1971, Kokuei, colour, 73m.

Sex Jack

(*Seizoku / Sekkusu jakku*)

性賊 セックスジャック

Cast: Tamaki KATORI, Michio AKIYAMA, Kazuo KOMIZU, Etsuko WAKAYAMA, Mikio TERAJIMA

1970, Wakamatsu Pro, part colour, 70m.

Availability: Kinokuniya Shoten (Japan, no subtitles) as part of Wakamatsu Box Set 1, with *Shinjuku Mad* and *Ecstasy of the Angels*

Sexual Wanderings

(*Sei no hôrô*)

性の放浪

Cast: Hatsuo YAMAYA, Rika MIZUSHIRO, Kemi ISHIBOSHI, Keiko YAMAO, Noriko TATSUMI, Masayoshi NOGAMI, Kazuo KOMIZU, Isao OKISHIMA

1967, Wakamatsu Pro / Nihon Cinema, part colour, 78m.

Sexy Operation: Playgirl

(*Oiroke sakusen: purêgâru*)

おいろけ作戦 プレーガール

Cast: Yasuko MATSUI (as Kazuko MAKI), Misato MURAKAMI

1963, Kokuei, B/W, unknown

Shinjuku Mad

(*Shinjuku Maddo*)

新宿マッド

Cast: Toshiyuki TANIGAWA, Yûko EJIMA, Mikio TERAJIMA

1970, Wakamatsu Pro, part colour, 65m.

Availability: Kinokuniya Shoten (Japan, no subtitles) part of Wakamatsu Box Set 1, with *Sex Jack* and *Ecstasy of the Angels*

The Sun Is Redder Than Blood

(*Chi wa taiyô yori mo akai*)

Alt. *Akamoru: The Dark, Wild Yearning, Blood Is Redder Than the Sun*

血は太陽よりも赤い

Cast: Kazuhiko ÔTSUKA, Tamami WAKAHARA, Mikio TERAJIMA

1966, Wakamatsu Pro, part colour, 80m.

The Sun's Navel (Taiyô no heso)

太陽のヘソ

Cast: Gorô MUTSUMI, Tiara Wood, George

Bellman, Helen Kennedy, Ralph Spencer,

Richard Avalon, John Anderson, Robert TAKAGI, Kazuko MAKI

1965, Kokuei, part colour, 85m.

Sweet Trap (Amai wana)

甘い罠

Cast: Gorô MUTSUMI, Tamaki KATORI, Reiko GOSHO

1963, Hôei, B/W, 81m.

Thirteen Serial Assaults

(*Jûsan-nin renzoku bôkô-ma*)

Alt. *Serial Rape*

十三人連続暴行魔

Alt. *Modern-Day Bizarre Assault History (Gendai ryôki bôkô-shi)*

現代猟奇暴行史

Cast: Tenzô UMATSU, Mayuko HINO, Kayoko SUGI, Ami TAKATORI, Kumiko ARAKI

1978, Shintocho, colour, 60m.

Violated Angels (Okasareta byakui)

犯された白衣

Cast: Jûrô KARA, Reiko KOYANAGI, Miki HAYASHI

1967, Wakamatsu Pro, part colour, 57m.

Availability: Kinokuniya Shoten (Japan, no subtitles) as part of Wakamatsu Box Set 4, with *Secret Acts Behind Walls* and *The Embryo Hunts in Secret*

Violent Virgin (Shojo geba geba)

処女ゲバゲバ

Cast: Toshiyuki TANIGAWA, Eri ASHIKAWA, Miki HAYASHI, Atsushi YAMATOYA, Akitaka KIMATA

1969, Wakamatsu Pro, part colour, 66m.

Availability: Kinokuniya Shoten (Japan, no subtitles) as part of Wakamatsu Box Set 2, with *Violent Virgin* and *Naked Bullet*

White Man-Made Beauty

(*Shiroi jinzô bijo*)

白の人造美女

Cast: Hidekatsu SHIBATA, Mari MUKAI, Shôhei YAMAMOTO, Tamami WAKAHARA, Mikio TERAJIMA, Rika MIZUSHIRO

1966, Wakamatsu Pro, part colour, 72m.

A Womb to Let (Haragashi onna)

腹貸し女

Cast: Asami KADO, Ken YOSHIZAWA, Sachiko ICHII, Kôhei TSUZAKI, Kô MATSUURA, Kenji FUKUMA

1968, Wakamatsu Pro, part colour, 72m.

Women Cruelty Dark Chronicles

(*Zannin onna ankoku-shi*)

残忍女暗黒史

Cast: Jun TODOKI, Rika OGURA, Shirô SHIMOMOTO

1976, Shintocho, colour, 61m.

Mamoru WATANABE

Abnormal Eros: Assault with No Tomorrow
(Ijô seiai: ashita-naki book)
暴行性愛: 明日なき暴行
Cast: Miki HAYASHI, Masayoshi NOGAMI,
Hiroshi IMAIZUMI
1970, Kokuei, part colour, 72m.

Apartment Wife Bondage
(Danchi-zuma o shibari)
団地妻を縛る
Cast: Naomi OKA, Mayuko HINO, Ren ÔSUGI,
Yuzuru ICHIMURA
1980, Shintocho, colour, 61m.

Despicable Man-Killing Benten
(Otoko goroshi gokuaku benten)
男ごろし 極悪弁天
Cast: Tamaki KATORI
1969, Nihon Geijutsu Kyôkai,
unknown, unknown

Hell Rope Catholic Nun
(Jigoku nawa shûdôjo)
地獄縄修道女
Cast: Yuka ASAGIRI, Naomi OKA, Masami SAKAE
1981, Shintocho, colour, 62m.

Holy Virgin Bondage (Sei-shôjo shibari)
聖処女縛り
Cast: Hachirô
TSURUOKA, Mayuko
HINO, Naomi OKA,
Kayoko SUGI, Shirô
SHIMOMOTO
1979, Shintocho,
colour, 61m.

Hussy (Abazure)
あばずれ
Cast: Kimiko ASUKA
1965, Ôgi Eiga, B/W,
unknown

Love Hotel: No Vacancies
(Rabu hateru: tadaima manjitsu)
ラブホテル 只今満室
Cast: Asami SEGAWA, Daisuke IJIMA, Azusa
NAKAYAMA, Bunmei TOBAYAMA, Chiyoko
IWASE
1984, Film Workers / Nikkatsu, colour, 65m.

Naomi Tani: Rope Skin Hell
(Tani Naomi: nawa hada jigoku)
谷ナオミ 縄肌地獄
Cast: Naomi TANI, Hachirô TSURUOKA, Shirô
SHIMOMOTO
1979, Shintocho, colour, unknown

Naomi Tani: Tied Up! (Tani Naomi: shibaru!)
谷ナオミ 縛る!
Vid. *Naomi Tani: Breast Binding*
(Tani Naomi: nyûbô shibari)
谷ナオミ 乳房縛り
Cast: Naomi TANI,
Hachirô TSURUOKA,
Shirô SHIMOMOTO,
Mayumi MIKAWA
1977, Shintocho,
colour, 61m.
Availability: Shintocho
Hard Porno (Japan,
no subtitles) VHS



Pervert Sex: I Melt (Hentai SEX: watashi torokeru)
変態SEX 私とろける
Cast: Reiko NATSU, Kayoko SUGI, Jirô KOKUBU,
Kazuhiro SANO, Kôhei TSUZAKI
1980, Gendai Eizô Kikaku / Nikkatsu, colour,
66m.

Porno Pilgrimage (Porno henreki)
ポルノ遍歴
Cast: Yôko MIZUKI, Tamaki KATORI, Hiroko FUJI
1972, Ôkura Eiga, part colour, 66m.

*Secret Hot Spring Town: Nightly Starfish (Maruhi
yu no machi: yoru no hitode)*
(秘)湯の街 夜のひとで
Cast: Reiko ÔTSUKI, Tomomi
SAHARA, Jun YOSHIDA, Hiroshi
NIKAIDÔ, Yûichi MINATO
1970, Kantô Eihai, part colour, 73m.
Availability: Uplink (Japan, no
subtitles)



Secret Picture! Tightly Bound Torture
(Mitsu-sha! kinbaku gômon)
密写! 緊縛拷問
Cast: Naomi OKA, Mayuko HINO,
Hitomi KAWAI, Masayoshi NOGAMI, Jun
YOSHIDA
1979, Shintocho,
colour, 60m.

Slave Widow
(Dorei mibôjin)
奴隷未亡人
Cast: Noriko TATSUMI,
Naomi TANI, Mari
IWAI, Masayoshi
NOGAMI
1967, Chûô Eiga /
Roppô Eiga, part
colour, 73m.
Availability:
Something Weird (US, English subtitles) VHS



*Tightly Bound White
Uniform Torture*
(Kinbaku byakui
gômon)
緊縛白衣拷問
Cast: Naomi OKA,
Mayuko HINO,
Hachirô TSURUOKA,
Naomi HAGIO, Jirô
KOKUBU
1982, Shintocho,
colour, 62m.

Virgin Binding (Shôjo o shibaru)
少女を縛る!
RR. *Virgin Tender Flesh Binding*
(Shôjo yawahada shibari)
少女柔肌縛り
Cast: Asuka MIYAZAKI, Sanae SHIBA, Kayoko
SUGI, Naomi OKA
1978, Shintocho, colour, 62m.

Virgin Rope Makeover
(Shôjo nawa geshô)
少女縄化粧
Cast: Mayuko HINO, Naomi
OKA, Masayoshi NOGAMI,
Shirô SHIMOMOTO, Kôji
KOKONOE
1979, Shintocho, colour, 60m.



Women Hell Song: Shakuhaichi Benten
(Onna jigoku uta: shakuhaichi benten)
おんな地獄唄 尺八弁天
Cast: Tamaki KATORI, Noriko TATSUMI, Rima
AOYAMA
1970, Kantô Eihai, part colour, 76m.
Availability: Uplink (Japan, no subtitles)

Seiichirô YAMAGUCHI

Love Hunter
(Koi no karyûdo: rabu hanta)
恋の狩人 ラブ・ハンター
Cast: Hidemi HARA, Mari TANAKA, Gen
MITAMURA, Kôju RAN, Ryûji ÔIZUMI, Akira
TAKAHASHI, Sumiko MINAMI
1972, Nikkatsu, colour, 72m.

Love Hunter: Desire
(Koi no karyûdo: yokubô)
恋の狩人 欲望
Cast: Mari TANAKA, Teruo MATSUYAMA, Aya
ICHIDA, Kozue YOSHIDA
1973, Nikkatsu, colour, 71m.

Shinya YAMAMOTO

Blossoming Out of Season
(Kuruizaki)
狂い咲き
Cast: Yasuko MATSUI
1965, Nihon Geijutsu Kyôkai, B/W, 78m.

Both Sides of Prostitution
(Baishun uraomote)
売春うら表
Cast: Rumi TAMA
1969, Tôkyô Kôei, unknown, unknown

Brutal Female Punishment Chronicle
(Zangyaku jokei-shi)
残虐女刑史
Cast: Yuki MINAMI, Yûko AKANE, Naomi TANI,
Yuriko AZUMA, Keiko ÔHARA, Rika MINASE, Kô
MATSUURA
1976, Shintocho, colour, 60m.

Comedy Woman's Onsen Rebellion
(Kigeki onna-yu sôdô)
喜劇女湯騒動
Vid. *Molester Woman's Onsen Rebellion*
(Chikan onna-yu sôdô)
痴漢女湯騒動
Cast: Yuki MINAMI
1973, Tôkyô Kôei / Shintocho, colour, 82m.
Availability: Shintocho Video (Japan, no
subtitles) VHS

Document: Pervert Woman's Onsen Peeping
(Dokumento: chikan onna-yu Nozoki)
ドキュメント 痴漢女湯のぞき
Cast: unknown
1975, Nikkatsu, colour, 65m.

*Lusty Invisible Man: Woman's Bathhouse
Peeping*
(Kôshoku tômei ningen: onna-yu nozoki)
好色透明人間 女湯覗き
Cast: Masayoshi NOGAMI, Yuri RISA, Yuka
ASAGIRI
1979, Taiheiyô Eiga-sha / Nikkatsu, B/W,
65m.

Films Referenced in Text

Midori Komatsu's Sexy Beauty Mark
(*Komatsu Midori: suki bokuro*)
小松みどりの好きぼくろ
Cast: Midori KOMATSU, Hajime TSUKUMO,
Masayoshi NOGAMI, Kazuyo EZAKI, Eve
1985, Milestone / Nikkatsu, colour, 79m.

Molester Judo Squad
(*Chikan judo-be*)
痴漢柔道部
Cast: Shinji KUBO, Yuki MINAMI, Yukiko
TACHIBANA
1977, Shintoho, colour, 60m.

Molester Night Train
(*Chikan yakô ressha*)
痴漢夜行列車
Cast: Katsurô SAKAI, Yuki MINAMI, Shinji KUBO
1977, Shintoho, colour, 62m.

Molester Physical Examination
(*Chikanshintai kensa*)
痴漢身体検査
Cast: Rika MINASE, Kiyomi YASUDA, Yasuji
MATSUURA, Shinji KUBO
1977, Shintoho, colour, 64m.

Molester Train
(*Chikan densha*)
痴漢電車
Cast: Keiko TSUKIOKA, Mayumi HIROTA, Mariko
KITAZAWA
1975, Shintoho, colour, 64m.

Molester Underground
(*Chikan chikatetsu*)
痴漢地下鉄
Cast: Yûko AKANE, Rika MINASE, Shinji KUBO
1975, Shintoho, colour, 63m.

Pregnancy Childbirth Abortion
(*Ninpu bunben chûzetsu*)
妊婦分娩中絶
Cast: unknown
1968, Shintoho, part colour, 77m.

Sacrificial Women
(*Ikenie no onna-tachi*)
生贄の女たち
Cast: Harry Reems, Yûko ASUKA, Yasuko
MATSUI, Terumi AZUMA, Naomi OKA
1978, Toei Central Films, colour, 82m.

Sex Counselling: The Perfect Contraception
(*Seika sôdan kanzen naru hinin*)
性科相談 完全なる避妊
Cast: Emiko SAKURA, Yûko HAMA, Mari KOJIMA,
Reiko ÔTSUKI, Michiyo MORI, Jun YOSHIDA
1969, Shintoho, colour, 78m.

Sexy Diary
(*Nikutai joyû nikki*)
Trans. *Flesh Actress Diary*
肉体女優日記
Cast: Tamaki KATORI, Yûichi MINATO, Jôji
ÔHARA, Akemi MINE
1965, Nihon Cinema Film (NCF), B/W, 80m.

Widow Boarding House
(*Mibôjin geshuku*)
未亡人下宿
Cast: Michiyo MORI, Mari KOJIMA, Kôju RAN,
Reiko ÔTSUKI, Kazuko TAKATORI
1969, Tôkyô Kôei / Shintoho, colour, 74m.

Woman's Onsen History
(*Onna-yu monogatari*)
女湯物語
Cast: Mari KOJIMA
1969, Tôkyô Kôei / Shintoho, colour, 74m.

Woman's Onsen Hundred Year History
(*Onna-yu hyakunen-shi*)
女湯百年史
Vid. *Molester Woman's Onsen Hundred Year History* (*Chikan onna-yu hyakunen-shi*)
痴漢女湯百年史
Cast: Misa AOYAMA, Rina HAYAKAWA
1974, Shintoho, colour, 64m.

Woman's Onsen! Woman's Onsen! Woman's Onsen!
(*Onna-yu! onna-yu! onna-yu!*)
女湯! 女湯! 女湯!
Cast: Kazuko SHIRAKAWA, Masayoshi
NOGAMI, Mari KOJIMA, Rumi SEGAWA, Shinji
KUBO
1970, Tôkyô Kôei / Shintoho, part colour, 75m.

Shingo YAMASHIRO

Female Cat
(*Meneko*)
女猫
Cast: Ai SAOTOME, Sachiko ITÔ, Kôichi IWAKI,
Kotomi AOKI, Mariko NISHINA, Hiroshi NAWA
1983, Nikkatsu, colour, 86m.

Osamu YAMASHITA

New: Chronicle of an Affair
(*Shin: jôji no rirekisho*)
新・情事の履歴書
Cast: Ayako HITOMI, Masayoshi NOGAMI,
Hachirô TSURUOKA, Kozue KASHIMA
1967, Kokuei, colour, unknown
Availability: Hummingbird (Japan, no
subtitles) VHS

Atsushi YAMATOYA

Dutch Wife of the Wasteland
(*Kôya no dacchi waifu*)
荒野のダッチワイフ
Orig. *Horror Doll*
(*Kyôfu ningyô*)
恐怖人形
Cast: Noriko TATSUMI, Yûichi MINATO, Shôhei
YAMAMOTO, Taka ÔKUBA, Hatsuo YAMAYA,
Akaji MARO
1967, Kokuei, B/W, 85m.
Availability: Uplink (Japan, no subtitles)

The Pistol that Sprouted Hair
(*Mô no haeta kenjû*)
毛の生えた拳銃
Cast: Ken YOSHIKAWA, Akaji MARO, Taka
ÔKUBA, Masao MATSUDA, Masao ADACHI
1968, Wakamatsu Pro, part colour, 70m.

Season of Betrayal
(*Uragiri no kisetsu*)
裏切りの季節
Cast: Yûzô TACHIKAWA, Juri TANIGUCHI, Hatsuo
YAMAYA, Mikio TERAJIMA
1966, Wakamatsu Pro, B/W, 77m.

Trapped in Lust (Aiyoku ni Wana)
愛欲の罠
Cast: Genjirô ARATO, Nozomi YASUDA, Rie
NAKAGAWA, Moeko EZAWA, Hatsuo YAMAYA
1973, Tenshōgi-kan / Nikkatsu, colour, 73m.

Yumi YOSHIYUKI

Aspiring Home Tutor: Soiled Pure Whiteness
(*Akogare no katei kyôshi*)
憧れの家庭教師 汚された純白
Cast: Mai SATSUKI, Yumika HAYASHI, Yumi
YOSHIYUKI, Naoyuki CHIBA, Tomohiro OKADA,
Takao NAKANO, Yasushi TAKEMOTO
2004, Office Yuki / OP Eiga, colour, 60m.

Chronic Rutting Adultery Wife
(*Mansei hatsujô furin-zuma*)
まん性発情不倫妻
Cast: Yumi YOSHIYUKI, Minako OGAWA, Takeshi
ITÔ, Masahiko SAKATA
1996, Office Yuki / Ôkura Eiga, colour, 60m.

Feeling Just Like Bardot
(*Bardô kanjiru mama ni*)
BARDO バルドウ 感じるままに
Cast: Rumi MOCHIZUKI, Akihiro SHIMIZU, Rika
HARADA, Sachiko HARA
2001, Total Media Corporation (V), colour,
68m.

I Am Lost in Love
(*Boku wa koi ni muchû*)
僕は恋に夢中
Cast: Mikio SATÔ, Tomohiro OKADA, Hiroki
MIYAMA, Sharin MORI
1999, Office Yuki / Ôkura Eiga, colour, 60m.

Innocent Kiss
(*Inosento kisu*)
イノセント・キス
Orig. *Sisters Donburi: No Pulling Out*
(*Shimai donburi: nukazu ni naka de*)
姉妹どんぶり 抜かずに中で
Cast: Kinako, Takumi HATAYAMA, Yûya
ISHIKAWA, Yumi YOSHIYUKI
1997, Ôkura Eiga, colour, 60m.
Availability: Uplink (Japan, no subtitles)

Just When I Need You Most
(*Setsunai kamo shirenai*)
せつないかもしれない
Cast: Naoyuki CHIBA, Tomohiro OKADA,
Fumito HIRAKAWA, Takahiro NOMURA, Yumika
HAYASHI, Seiji NAKAMITSU, Atsuko SUZUKI, Rio
MOCHIZUKI
2004, Office Yuki / Ôkura Eiga, colour, 60m.

Miss Peach
(*Misu Piichi: kyonyû wa momo no umami*)
Trans. *Miss Peach: Peachy Sweetness Huge Breasts*
ミスピーチ 巨乳は
桃の甘み
Cast: Yumika
HAYASHI, Sakurako
KAORU, Mina KOJIMA,
Tomohiro OKADA,
Takao NAKANO
2005, Office Yuki / OP
Eiga, colour, 60m.
Availability: Uplink
(Japan, no subtitles)



Naughty Boys

(Uweki na bokura: NAUGHTY BOYS)

浮気なぼくら NAUGHTY BOYS

Cast: Naoyuki CHIBA, Tomohiro OKADA, Kôichi IMAIZUMI, Takao NAKANO, Christian Storms
2001, ENK, colour, 60m.

Note: Kôichi IMAIZUMI's version produced outside of the pink industry has been released on Region 2 in the UK with English subtitles by Peccadillo Pictures.

The True Face of Virgin Boys

(Otome-tachi no sugao)

乙男たちの素顔

Cast: Yumeno, Masaya ISHIKAWA, Tomohiro OKADA

1998, Office Yuki / OP Eiga, colour, 60m.

Takahisa ZEZE

Anarchy in Japansuke

Orig. *Anarchy in Japansuke: The Woman Who Comes When Watched*

(Anâki in japansuke: mirarete iku onna)

アナーキー・インじゃぱんすけ 見られてイク女

Cast: Kazuhiro SANO, Yumeka SASAKI, Yukiko IZUMI, Natsuko SAWADA, Mariko NAKA, Mikio SATÔ, Yûichi MINATO, Tarô SUWA, Shirô SHIMOMOTO
1999, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 68m.
Availability: Broadway (Japan, no subtitles)



[Blue Sky (Aozora)]

青空

Orig. *Bestial Lust Demon: Rampage*

(Jûyoku-ma rankô)

獣欲魔 乱行

Cast: Sayoko NAKAJIMA, Takahiko KOBAYASHI, Takeshi ITÔ, Kiyomi ITÔ, Shirô SHIMOMOTO

1989, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 61m.

Availability: Broadway (Japan, no subtitles)

The Cicada That Chirps Through the Night

(Yoru naku semi)

夜鳴く蟬

Orig. *Endless Sex*

(Owaranai sekkusu)

終わらないセックス

Cast: Shôko KUDÔ, Yôta KAWASE, Takeshi ITÔ, Takahiko KOBAYASHI, Yukiko IZUMI
1995, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 64m.
Availability: Broadway (Japan, no subtitles)



Crevice of Skin

(Hada no sukima)

Alt. *A Gap in the Skin*

肌の隙間

Cast: Fujiko, Kenji

KOTANI, Yozaburô ITÔ, Daisuke IJIMA

2004, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 77m.

Availability:

Salvation (UK, English subtitles)

Dirty Maria

(Kegareta maria)

Trans. *Defiled Maria*

汚れた女 (マリア)

Cast: Akira YOSHINO, Tarô SUWA, Shôko KUDÔ, Kazuhiro SANO, Yôta KAWASE, Takahiko KOBAYASHI, Yukiko IZUMI

1998, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 79m.

Availability: Salvation (UK, English subtitles)

Dream of Garuda

(Karura no yume)

迦楼羅の夢

Orig. *High Class Soap Technique 4: Blissful Secret Play*

(Kôkyû sôpu tekunikku 4: monzetsu higi)

高級ソープテクニッ

ク4 悶絶秘戯

Cast: Takeshi ITÔ, Saki KURIHARA, Shirô SHIMOMOTO, Hotaru HAZUKI

1994, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 62m.

Availability: Screen Edge (UK, English subtitles), Broadway (Japan, no subtitles)



End of the World

(Aokan hakusho: minami no shima e tsuretette / End of the World)

Trans. *The Aokan Papers: Take Me to the Southern Isle / End of the World*

あおかん白書 南の島へ連れてって / End of the World

Orig. *Loads of Filth*

(Sukebe tenkomori)

すけべてんこもり

Cast: Mai KAWANA, Yôta KAWASE, Yukiko IZUMI, Takeshi ITÔ, Takahiko KOBAYASHI

1995, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 65m.

The Expected Scene

(Kurubeki kôkei)

来るべき光景

Orig. *Red Affair*

(Akai jôji)

赫い情事

Cast: Hotaru HAZUKI, Takeshi ITÔ, Shôko KUDÔ, Yôta KAWASE, Yukiko IZUMI, Kazuhiro SANO, Takahiko KOBAYASHI

1996, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 65m.

Go to Haneda and You Will See Kids Who Have Become Pirates Waiting to Depart

(Haneda e itte miro, soko ni wa kaizoku ni natta gakidomo ga imaya to shuppatsu o matteiru)

Alt. *Good Luck Japan!*

羽田に行ってみろ そこには海賊になったガキどもが今やと出発を待っている

Orig. *Extracurricular Lesson: Violent Assault*

(Kagai jugyô: bôkô)

課外授業 暴行

Cast: Sayoko NAKAJIMA, Kunihiro MATSUNAGA, Rekishi SEINO, Mami OGAWA, Kazuhiro SANO, Shirô SHIMOMOTO

1989, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 63m.

Availability: Uplink (Japan, no subtitles)



My Train Is Supposed to Be Going North But It's Going South

(Watakushi no kisha wa kita e hashitte iru hazu na noni koko de wa minami e kakete iru)

わたくしの汽車は北へ走っているはずなのにここではみなみへかけている

Orig. *Molester Train: Mischievous Wives*

(Chikan densha: ikenai tsuma-tachi)

痴漢電車 いけない妻たち

Cast: Kanako KISHI, Takeshi ITÔ, Yûko ITÔ, Bunmei TOBAYAMA, Kazuhiro SANO, Ichiko KAMATA

1992, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 61m.

No Man's Land (Nô manzu rando)

ノーマンズ・ランド

Orig. *Obscene Group Rampage: Beast*

(Waisetsu bôso shûdan: kemono)

猥褻暴走集団 獣

Cast: Risa KATÔ, Takeshi ITÔ, Takahiko KOBAYASHI, Kiyomi ITÔ, Mami OGAWA, Kazuhiro SANO

1991, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 62m.

Availability: Screen Edge (UK, English subtitles)

The Phenomenon Called Myself Is a Single Blue Illumination Within the Assumed Organic Interchanging Electric Lamp

(Watakushi to iu genshō wa katei sareta yûki kôryû dentō no hitotsu no aoi shōmei desu)

わたくしという現象は仮定された有機交流電燈のひとつの青い照明です

Orig. *Garden of No Men: Uniform Lesbian*

(Kindan no sono: ze seifuku rezu)

禁男の園 ゼ・制服レズ

Cast: Kanako KISHI, Ichiko KAMATA, Takeshi ITÔ, Yumika HAYASHI, Kazuhiro SANO, Takahiko KOBAYASHI

1992, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 61m.

Raigyo

雷魚

Orig. *The Woman in Black Underwear: Raigyo*

(Kuroi shitagi no onna: raigyo)

黒い下着の女 雷魚

Cast: Moe SAKURA, Takeshi ITÔ, Ryûmei HOMURA, Bunmei TOBAYAMA, Kazuhiro SANO, Yumi YOSHIYUKI, Yukiko IZUMI

1997, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 75m.

Availability: Salvation (UK, English subtitles)



Tokyo X Erotica

(Tôkyô x erotika: shibareru kairaku)

Trans. *Tokyo X Erotica: Numbing Pleasure*

トーキョー×エロティカ 痺れる快楽

Cast: Yumeka SASAKI, Mayuko SASAKI, Eri, Mariko NAKA, Yûichi ISHIKAWA, Shirô SHIMOMOTO, Takeshi ITÔ, Yôta KAWASE, Mikio SATÔ, Kazuhiro SANO

2001, Kokuei / Shintoho, part colour (+DV), 79m.

Availability: Salvation (UK, English subtitles), Eclectic (US, English subtitles)

Widow: Agony in Mourning Dress

(Mibôjin: mofuku no modae)

未亡人 喪服の悶え

Cast: Kazuhiro SANO, Yuri ISHIHARA, Hotaru HAZUKI, Takahiko KOBAYASHI, Takeshi ITÔ, Bunmei TOBAYAMA

1993, Kokuei / Shintoho, colour, 62m.

Basukon

Note: The years of these titles and their makers are unknown.

Abortion or Contraception
(*Datai ka hinin ka*)
堕胎か避妊か

The True Nature of Beauty
(*Utsukushiki hontai*)
美しき本態

Show Eiga

Note: Unless listed, the years of these titles and their makers are unknown.

Naked Angel
(*Hadaka no tenshi*)
裸の天使

The Princess Who Got Naked
(*Hadaka no natta otsuhime-sama*)
裸のなった乙姫様

Red Lights of Tokyo
(*Sekushii mûdo: Tôkyô no yoru*, 1963)
セクシームード・東京の夜

Sherbet Nude
(*Sherbet Nude: Onna no ura-mado*)
Sherbet Nude・女の裏窓

Strip Tokyo
(*Sutorippu Tôkyô*)
ストリップ東京

Non-Pink (Japanese)

The Abalone Girls
Chinkoro ama-ko
(Yôichi MAEDA, 1965)

An Actor's Revenge
Yukinojô henge
(Kon ICHIKAWA, 1963)

Actress
Joyû
(Teinosuke KINUGASA, 1947)

AKA Serial Killer
Ryakushô: renzoku shasatsu-ma
(Masao ADACHI, 1969/75)

All Under the Moon
Tsuki wa dotchi ni deteiru
(Yôichi SAI, 1993)

Alone in the Night
Yoru ga mata kuru
(Takashi ISHII, 1994)

Amateur Singing Contest
Nodo jiman
(Kazuyuki IZUTSU, 1999)

And Another Day Goes By As Usual...
Konnichi mo mata sugita
(Masao ADACHI, 1960)

Annyong Kimchee
Annyon kimuchi
(Tetsuaki MATSUE, 1999)

Another Lonely Hitman
Shin kanashiki hittoman
(Rokurô MOCHIZUKI, 1995)

Ashura
Ashura-jô no hitomi
(Yôjirô TAKITA, 2005)

Bashing
Basshingu
(Masahiro KOBAYASHI, 2005)

The Bath Harem
Ukiyo-buro
(Keigo KIMURA, 1958)

Battles Without Honour and Humanity
Jingi naki tatakai
(Kinji FUKASAKU, 1973)

Bedtime Eyes
Beddotaimu aizû
(Tatsumi KUMASHIRO, 1987)

Bicycle Sighs
Jitensha toiki
(Shion SONO, 1990)

Black Angel vol 1 & vol 2
Kuro no tenshi vol 1 & vol 2
(Takashi ISHII, 1997/99)

Black Cat Mansion
Bôrei kaibyô yashiki
(Nobuo NAKAGAWA, 1958)

Blind Beast
Môjû
(Yasuzô MASUMURA, 1968)

Bootleg Film
Kaizokuban = BOOTLEG FILM
(Masahiro KOBAYASHI, 1999)

Border Line
(Lee Sang-il, 2002)

Bound for the Fields, the Mountains and the Seacoast
No-yuki yama-yuki umibe-yuki
(Nobuhiko ÔBAYASHI, 1986)

Boy
Shônen
(Nagisa ÔSHIMA, 1969)

Boys Be Ambitious
Kishiwada shônen gurentai
(Kazuyuki IZUTSU, 1996)

Branded to Kill
Koroshi no rakuin
(Seijun SUZUKI, 1967)

Bright Future
Akarui mirai
(Kiyoshi KUROSAWA, 2003)

The Brutal Hopelessness of Love
Hito ga hito o ai suru koto no dôshiyô mo nasa
(Takashi ISHII, 2007)

Calamari Wrestler
Ika resurâ
(Minoru KAWASAKI, 2004)

Case of the Disjointed Murder
Furenzoku satsujin jiken
(Chûsei SONE, 1977)

The Catch
Gyoei no mure
(Shinji SÔMAI, 1983)

The Ceremony
Gishiki
(Nagisa ÔSHIMA, 1971)

A Certain Night's Kiss
Aru yo no seppun
(Yasuki CHIBA, 1946)

Charisma
Karisuma
(Kiyoshi KUROSAWA, 1999)

Cherry Orchard
Sakura no sono
(Shun NAKAHARA, 1990)

Chûji's Travel Diary
Chûji tabi nikki
(Daisuke ITÔ, 1927)

A Colt Is My Passport
Kenjû wa ore no pasupôto
(Takashi NOMURA, 1967)

Comedy: It's Tough Being a Woman Too
Kikeki: onna mo tsurai wa
(Mio EZAKI, 1970)

Concent
Konsento
(Shun NAKAHARA, 2002)

Cop Festival
Deka matsuri series
(Makoto SHINOZAKI, 2003 -)

Crazed Fruit
Kurutta kajitsu
(Kô NAKAHIRA, 1956)

Crazy Family
Gyakufunsha kazoku
(Sôgo ISHII, 1984)

Cruel Story of Youth
Seishun zankoku monogatari
(Nagisa ÔSHIMA, 1960)

Cycling Chronicles: Landscapes the Boy Saw
17-sai no fûkei: shônen wa nani o mita no ka
(Kôji WAKAMATSU, 2005)

Cyclops
Kikuropusu
(Jôji IIDA, 1987)

Dangerous Temptation
Abunai na yûwaku
(Satoru KOBAYASHI, 1960)

The Day the Gods Lapsed
Kami no ochite kita hi
(Ryûji ÔYA, 1979)

Death By Hanging
Kôshikei
(Nagisa ÔSHIMA, 1968)

Desire Without Tomorrow
Ashita naki yokubô
(Hisayasu SATÔ, 1980)

Diary of a Shinjuku Thief
Shinjuku dorobô nikki
(Nagisa ÔSHIMA, 1969)

Disordered Hair
Midare-gami
(Teinosuke KINUGASA, 1961)

Distant Thunder
Enrai
(Kichitarô NEGISHI, 1981)

Dog Star
(Takahisa ZEZE, 2002)

Down the Drain
Hadashi no pikunikku
(Shinobu YAGUCHI, 1993)

Dry Flower
Dorai Furawâ
(Kazuhiro SANO, 1986)

Dry Wife and Dominating Husband
Dorai fujin to teishûkanpaku
(Toshirô ÔMI, 1957)

The D-Slope Murder Case
D-saka no satsujin jiken
(Akio JISSÔJI, 1998)

Edogawa Rampo's Perverted Beast
Edogawa Rampo no injû
(Tai KATÔ, 1977)

Eighteen-Year-Old, to the Sea
Jûhachi-sai, umi e
(Toshiya FUJITA, 1978)

Eijanaika
(Shôhei IMAMURA, 1981)

An Electrician and His Wife
Denkô to sono tsuma
(Henry KOTANI, 1921)

Embracing
Ni tsutsumarete
(Naomi KAWASE, 1992)

Emperor Tomato Ketchup
Tomato kechappu kôtei
(Shûji TERAYAMA, 1970)

The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On
Yuki yukite shingun
(Kazuo HARA, 1987)

Empire of Passion
Ai no bôrei
(Nagisa ÔSHIMA, 1978)

Endless Waltz
Endoresu warutsu
(Kôji WAKAMATSU, 1995)

Erotic Liaisons
Erotikku na kankei
(Kôji WAKAMATSU, 1992)

The Erotic Shogun and His Twenty-One Prostitutes
Ero shogun to nijûichi-nin no aishô
(Norifumi SUZUKI, 1972)

Eureka
(Shinji AOYAMA, 2000)

Every Japanese Woman Makes Her Own Curry
Karê raisu no onna-tachi
(Tetsuaki MATSUE, 2003)

Evil Dead Trap
Shiryô no wana
(Toshiharu IKEDA, 1988)

Evil Spirits of Japan
Nihon no akuryô
(Kazuo KUROKI, 1970)

The Excitement of the Do-Re-Mi-Fa Girl
Doremifa-musume no chi wa sawagu
(Kiyoshi KUROSAWA, 1985)

Executive Koala
Koara kachô
(Minoru KAWASAKI, 2005)

Exorsister
Uratsukidôji
(Takao NAKANO, 1994)

Extreme Private Eros: Love Song 1974
Gokushiteki erosu: renka 1974
(Kazuo HARA, 1974)

Eye Witness Report: Chronicle of the Haneda Struggle
Gennin hôkokusho: Haneda tôsô no kiroku
(Shinsuke OGAWA, 1967)

Family Game
Kazoku gêmu
(Yoshimitsu MORITA, 1983)

Female Slave Ship
Onna dorei-sen
(Yoshiki ONODA, 1960)

Fighting Dragon Story
Tôryû-den
(Toshiki SATÔ, 1995) – parts 1 and 2

Fighting Elegy
Kenka ereji
(Seijun SUZUKI, 1966)

Film Noir
Koroshi
(Masahiro KOBAYASHI, 2000)

Fire Festival
Hi-matsuri
(Mitsuo YANAGIMACHI, 1985)

Flesh Actress Murder: Five Culprits
Nikutai joyû koroshi: gonin no hanzaisha
(Teruo ISHII, 1957)

Flying
Hishô
(Chûsei SONE, 1988)

Forbidden Sands
Kindan no suna
(Masao HORIUCHI, 1957)

Freeze Me
Furîzu mî
(Takashi ISHII, 2000)

The Funeral
Osôshiki
(Jûzô ITAMI, 1984)

Gamera: The Guardian of the Universe
Gamera daikaijû kuchu kessen
(Shûsuke KANEKO, 1995)

Gang! Is the Sky Clearing Over There?
Gyangu yo mukô wa harete iru ka
(Takahisa ZEZE, 1985)

Garden of Eden
Eden no sono
(Yasuzô MASUMURA, 1981)

Gate of Flesh
Nikutai no mon
(Seijun SUZUKI, 1964)

Gate of Hell
Jigokumon
(Teinosuke KINUGASA, 1953)

Get Up!
Geroppa!
(Kazuyuki IZUTSU, 2003)

Ghost of Kasane
Kaidan kasanegafuchi
(Nobuo NAKAGAWA, 1957)

Ghost of Yotsuya
Tôkaidô Yotsuya kaidan
(Nobuo NAKAGAWA, 1959)

Ghost Story: Cruel Phantom
Kaidan zankoku yûrei
(Satoru KOBAYASHI, 1964)

Ghost Story: Phantom Foreigner
Kaidan ijin yûrei
(Satoru KOBAYASHI, 1963)

Ghost Story: The Living Koheiji
Kaidan: ikiteiru Koheiji
(Nobuo NAKAGAWA, 1982)

Girl Boss Guerrilla
Sukeban gerira
(Norifumi SUZUKI, 1972)

Girl Boss: Reform School Breakout
Sukeban: kanka-in dassô
(Sadao NAKAJIMA, 1973)

Girls Behind the Bars
Ôkii naru ai kanata ni
(Tetsurô ÔNO, 1960)

God of War Admiral Yamamoto and the Combined Fleet
Gunshin Yamamoto gensui to rengô kantai
(Toshio SHIMURA, 1956)

Films Referenced in Text

Godzilla, Mothra and King Ghidorah: Giant Monsters All-Out Attack
Gojira, Mosura, Kingu Gidorâ: Daikaijû sôkôgeki
 (Shûsuke KANEKO, 2001)

Going West
Nishi e
 (Kan MUKAI, 1997)

Goke, Body Snatcher from Hell
Kyûketsuki Gokemidoro
 (Hajime SATÔ, 1968)

Gonin
 (Takashi ISHII, 1995)

Graveyard of Honour
Jingi no hakaba
 (Kinji FUKASAKU, 1975)

Half Eternity
Eien no 1/2
 (Kichitarô NEGISHI, 1987)

Heat Haze Theatre
Kagerôza
 (Seijun SUZUKI, 1981)

Hello to Mr Ghost
Mr gôsuto ni yorishiku
 (Shinya YAMAMOTO, 1991)

Hi-Bi: Days of Fire
Hi-bi
 (Banmei TAKAHASHI, 2004)

Hole in the Sky
Sora no ana
 (Kazuyoshi KUMAKIRI, 2001)

A Hole of My Own Making
Jibun no ana no naka de
 (Tomu UCHIDA, 1955)

Hometown
Furusato
 (Kan MUKAI, 1999)

Hoodlum Soldier
Heitai yakuza
 (Yasuzô MASUMURA, 1965)

Hot Spring Snapping Turtle Geisha
Onsen suppon geisha
 (Norifumi SUZUKI, 1972)

The House of Sleeping Beauties
Nemureru bijo
 (Hiroto YOKOYAMA, 1995)

The Human Chair
Ningen isu
 (Toshiyuki MIZUTANI, 1997)

Hush!
Hasshu!
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 DVD distributor of Million Film titles
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 Masaru Konuma fanpage (Japanese and French) <http://www.konumagumi.com/>

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<http://www.shinnihoneizo.co.jp>

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<http://home.shin-toho.co.jp>

Tetsuji TAKECHI
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www.takechitetsuji.com

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<http://www.wakamatsukoji.org/>

Mamoru WATANABE
 Official Home Page (Japanese)
<http://www.nona.dti.ne.jp/~aaa/watanabe/index.html>

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 Video on Demand service of Shinto films
<http://xxx.xcity.jp/shin-toho/top.htm>

Documentaries and TV spots

Japanorama
 Dir: Peter Boyd Maclean
 UK, 6 x 25m.
 Series first transmitted on BBC1, Sunday, 9 June, 2002
BBC TV series hosted by Jonathan Ross aimed at introducing Japanese pop culture in the year Japan and South Korea co-hosted the World Cup. Episode #2, themed 'Sex' included interviews with Shôhei Imamura, Hisayasu Satô, Toshiki Satô, Noboru Tanaka, and Takahisa Zeze.

Mondo Macabro:
Japanese "Romantic Porno"
 Directors: Andy Starke and Pete Tombs. UK, 30m.
 First transmitted on Channel 4, 16 December, 2001
Episode on Nikkatsu's Roman Porno as part of Pete Tombs's 6-part UK TV series Mondo Macabro, tied in with his book and DVD label of the same name.

NONFIX: Four Devils of Pink: Mixture of Perversion and Philosophy
NONFIX: Pink Shitennô – H to tetsugaku no kôsaku
 NONFIX – ピンク 四天王 Hと哲学の交錯
 Japan, 52m.
 First transmitted on Fuji TV, 17 June, 1998
Special on the Four Devils narrated by Ren Ôsugi. Features a rare interview with Keiko Satô.

Pink Ribbon
 ピンク リボン
 Dir: Kenjiro FUJII (藤井謙二郎)
 Japan, 118m.
 2004
Thorough but scattershot theatrical documentary produced in conjunction with Uplink introducing viewers to the world of pink. Interviewees include Masao Adachi, Yutaka Ikejima, Kiyoshi Kurosawa, Mitsuru Meike, Banmei Takahashi, Yûji Tajiri, Kôji Wakamatsu, Mamoru Watanabe, Yumi Yoshiyuki.

Sadistic and Masochistic
 サディスティック & マゾヒスティック
 Dir: Hideo NAKATA (中田秀夫)
 Japan, 91m.
 2000
Up-close-and-personal documentary from Ring director Nakata on his early mentor at Nikkatsu, Masaru Konuma. Featuring interviews with Konuma himself, and many of those who worked with him, such as Yûko Katagiri, Kôyû Ohara, Naomi Tani. Produced and distributed by Nikkatsu.

A Sixty-Seven Year Old's Landscape: What Kôji Wakamatsu Saw
67-sai no fûkei: Wakamatsu Kôji wa nani wo mita no ka
 67歳の風景 若松孝二は何を見たのか
 Dir: Kayo TAKEFUJI (竹藤佳世)
 Japan, 67m.
 2005
Making-of documentary for Wakamatsu's Cycling Chronicles: Landscapes the Boy Saw.

Sterben im Reich der Lust
Mourir d'amour (French language version)
 Dir: Georg and Eva Bense,
 Germany, 75m.
 First transmitted on Arte/ZDF, 4 November, 2005
TV documentary on sex and death in Japanese culture, featuring interviews with Nagisa Ôshima, Keiko Satô, Takahisa Zeze and Roland Domenig.

Wide Scramble:
Shinya Yamamoto Goes to North Korea
Waido sukuranburu: Yamamoto Shinya ga Kita-chôsen e
 ワイド！スクランブル:山本晋也が北朝鮮へ
 Japan, 60m.
 First transmitted on Asahi TV, October 2004
Special edition of Asahi TV's Wide Scramble current events program in which regular commentator Shinya Yamamoto attends the 9th Pyongyang Film Festival, held between 12-20 September, 2004.

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World Eiga	ワールド映画		47, 53, 216, 350, 355, 364
Xces Film	エクセスフィルム		10-12, 175, 245, 255, 265, 289, 291, 296, 299, 300, 332, 336, 337, 339, 341, 343, 345, 347, 351, 353-359, 363, 380
Yamabe Pro	ヤマベプロ		221, 222, 347, 350, 351
Yū Pro	雄プロ		207, 242-244, 301, 344

Glossary of Terms

Term	Japanese	A.K.A.	Page
Aka-basu jôeitai	赤バス上映隊	Red Bus Screening Troop	112, 113, 118
Angura	アングラ	'Underground'	96
Anpo	安保	US-Japan Security Treaty. Abbr. <i>Nichibei anzen hoshô jôyaku</i>	44, 54, 69, 70, 87, 106, 107, 206
Asama Sansô Jiken	浅間山荘事件	Asama Mountain Lodge Incident	116, 118-120, 252
Baishun Bôshi-hô	売春防止法	Anti-Prostitution Law	32, 180
Baiorensu poruno	バイオレンス ポルノ	Violence Porno	228
Basukon eiga	バスコン映画	Birth control films	22, 23, 30, 99, 122, 369
Benshi	弁士	Silent film narrator	32, 141
Bide-rin	ビデ倫	Abbr. <i>Nihon bideo rinri kyôkai</i>	15, 214, 290, 339
Bini-hon	ビニ本	Adult magazines, lit 'vinyl books'	218
Bokashi	暈し	Optical blurring	14, 15, 136, 182, 195, 218, 246, 288
Bund	ブント	See <i>Kyôsanshugisha dômei</i>	
Bunka eiga	文化映画	Culture film	21
Bunkachô	文化庁	Agency for Cultural Affairs	18
Burû fuirumu	ブルーフィルム	Blue film	25
Butoh	舞踏	Contemporary Japanese Dance Form	46, 72, 103, 109, 305
Chûô Kôron	中央公論	Monthly magazine	74
Dokuritsu eiga	独立映画	'Independent Film'	45, 337
Eiga-hô	映画法	The Film Law	21, 22
Eiren	映連	Abbr. <i>Nihon eiga seisakusha renmei</i>	83
Eirin	映倫	Abbr. <i>Eirin kanri iinkai</i>	14, 15, 18, 22, 33, 64, 71, 74, 81, 83, 123, 138, 214, 284, 290, 300, 338, 339, 378, 380
Eirin Kanri linkai	映倫管理委員会	Commission for the Administration of the Motion Picture Code of Ethics. See <i>Eirin</i>	
Erodakushon eiga	エロダクション映画	Eroduction Film	11
Ero-guro	エログロ	Erotic-grotesque	12, 32, 233
Fûkei-ron	風景論	Landscape theory	56, 104-106, 111, 112, 120
Gei Poruno	ゲイ・ポルノ	Gay Porno	244, 300-307
Gekiga	劇画	'Dramatic Pictures' manga	95
Hatta Motô Enshutsu Kenkyûjo	八田元夫演出研究所	Hatta Motô Theatrical Research Centre	60
Heisei jidai	平成時代	Heisei Era	251, 262, 272, 276, 313
Hikikomori	引き籠り	Acute social withdrawal	266
Honban	本番	'The real thing'	15, 143, 216, 218, 273, 274, 299
Ippan eiga	一般映画	'General', 'normal' or 'universal' movie – i.e. non-pink	250
Jidai-geki	時代劇	Period drama	18, 31, 51, 60, 85, 125
Jieitai	自衛隊	Self Defence Force	69, 101, 115, 128, 263
Jiji eiga	時事映画	Current events film	21
Jimintô	自民党	Abbr. <i>Jiyû Minshu-tô</i>	70
Jishu seisaku eiga	自主製作映画	Self-produced films	207, 254, 259-261, 263, 265, 281, 301, 307, 313, 315, 332
Jiyû Minshu-tô	自由民主党,	Liberal Democratic Party. See <i>jimintô</i>	
Jo-kantoku	助監督	Assistant Director	253
Junketsu eiga	純潔映画	Chastity films	22
Kameari-za	亀有名画座	Kameari Cinema	315
Kannô shosetsu	官能小説	Erotic novel	220

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Kanryû	韓流	Korean wave	336
Kantô Daishinsai	関東大震災	Great Kantô Earthquake of 1923	135, 199
Kantoku	監督	Director	65
Kasutori zasshi	カストリ雑誌	"Dregs" magazine	23
Keihin Anpo Kyôtô	京浜安保共闘	Keihin Anti-Security Treaty Joint Struggle	107, 116
Kenpeitai	憲兵隊	Military Police	70, 219
Kidôtai	機動隊	Riot police	75, 77, 93, 106
Kinema Junpô	キネマ旬報	Magazine	52, 55, 72, 123, 128, 137, 141, 177, 194, 207, 218, 236, 250, 307, 378, 379
Kitan Club	綺譚クラブ	Magazine	23, 221
Kôhai	後輩	Junior, apprentice	253
Kôhaku Utagassen	紅白歌合戦	Girl-Boy Song Contest	66
Kokujoku eiga	国辱映画	'National Disgrace' film	83
Kôshû Eisei-hô	公衆衛生保	Public Hygiene Law	14, 64
Kyôsanshugisha Dômei	共産主義者同盟	Communist League. Also <i>Bund</i>	106, 107
Kyôsanshugisha Dômei Sekigun-ha	共産主義者同盟赤軍派	Communist League Red Army Faction	79
Maebari	前張り	Pubic shield	14, 71
Meiji jidai	明治時代	Meiji Era (1868-1912)	31, 93, 124, 196, 197, 211, 217
Naigai Times	内外タイムズ	Newspaper	53
Nichibei Anzen Hoshô Jôyaku	日米安全保障条約	See <i>Anpo</i>	
Nichidai Eiken	日大映研	See <i>Nihon University Film Study Club</i>	
Nihon Bideo Rinri Kyôkai	日本ビデオ倫理協会	Nihon Ethics of Video Association. See <i>bide-rin</i>	
Nihon Daigaku Eiga Kenkyû-kai	日本大学映画研究会	Nihon University Film Study Club	87
Nihon Eiga Seisakusha Renmei	日本映画製作者連盟	Japan Film Producers Alliance	83
Nihon Kyôsan-tô	日本共産党	Japan Communist Party (JCP)	70, 71, 76, 98, 106, 107
Nihon Sekigun	日本赤軍	Japanese Red Army (JRA)	11, 76, 79, 108, 110, 111, 118, 119, 122
Nihon Shakai-tô	日本社会党	Japan Socialist Party (JSP)	70, 107
Nihontate	二本館	Double bill	46
Ninkyô eiga	任侠映画	'Chivalry films', a sub-genre of yakuza films	32
Ôgon jidai	黄金時代	Golden Age	31, 337
Oiroke eiga	お色気映画	Sexy film	11
OP Chên	OPチェーン	OP Chain	53, 58, 204
Onnagata	女形	Also read as <i>Oyama</i>	
Ôru karâ	オールカラー	'All colour'	62, 129
Osan eiga	お産映画	Birth films	22,, 99
Oyama	女形	Lit. 'woman style'. Also read as <i>Onnagata</i>	20
Pâto karâ	パート・カラー	Part colour	58, 61, 66, 97, 129, 203, 206
Pink Taishô Award	ピンク大賞		293, 310, 314-317, 324, 331, 332
Rengô Sekigun	連合赤軍	United Red Army (URA)	79, 107, 116, 118, 120
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Sanbontate	三本館	Triple bill	46
Seijin eiga	成人映画	Adult Films (R-18)	10, 18, 53, 60, 80, 131, 182, 218, 238, 248, 249, 251, 256, 280, 284, 312, 319, 332, 338
Seikyôiku eiga	性教育映画	Sex education films	22
Sekigun-ha	赤軍派	Red Army Faction, see <i>Kyôsanshugisha dômei sekigun-ha</i>	

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Shitenno	四天皇	Four Devils	15, 249-291, 299, 303, 304, 311-313, 315, 321, 327, 328
Shomin-geki	庶民劇	'Common man' dramas	21
Shôwa jidai	昭和時代	Shôwa Era (1926-89)	70, 93, 135, 138, 212, 250, 260, 262, 288
Shûkan Taishû	週刊大衆	Tabloid-style magazine	220
Taishô jidai	大正時代	Taishô Era (1912-25)	93, 134, 136-138, 192, 212
Tate no kai	楯の会	Shield Society	302
Tenjô Sajiki	天井桟敷	Terayama's theatrical group	97, 260, 299, 332
Tenkei Gekijô	転形劇場	Theatrical company	239
Terekura	テレクラ	Tel-club, phone dating service	278
Tôei Poruno Rosen	東映ポルノ路線	Toei's porno line	25
Tokkôtai	特攻隊	Suicide 'kamikaze' squads	280
Tokudashi	特出し	'special display', or 'open stage'	28
Umeda Rôzu Gekijô	梅田ローズ劇場	Umeda Rose Theatre	300-302
VAN Eiga Kagaku Kenkyûjo	VAN 映画科学研究所	VAN Film Science Research Centre	87, 97, 112
Waieiga	猥映画	Stag films	25
Y-eiga	Y映画	See <i>waieiga</i>	
Yô-pin	洋ピン	Foreign sex films	46, 182, 200, 204
Yuna	湯女	Bathhouse prostitute	285
Zainichi kankokujin	在日韓国人	Korean residents in Japan	194, 207, 211, 260, 281, 290, 313, 314
Zatsumintô	雑民党	Political party founded by Ken Tôgô, lit. 'Crude People's Party'	301
Zen Nihon Gakusei Jichikai sôrengô	全日本学生自治会総連合	All-Japan Federation of Student Self-governing Associations. See <i>Zengakuren</i>	
Zengakukyôtô	全学共闘	All-University Joint Struggle. See <i>Zenkyôtô</i>	
Zengakuren	全学連	Abbr. <i>Zen Nihon Gakusei Jichikai sôrengô</i>	70, 71, 75, 76, 87, 88, 98, 122
Zenkyôtô	全共闘	See <i>zengakukyôtô</i>	106

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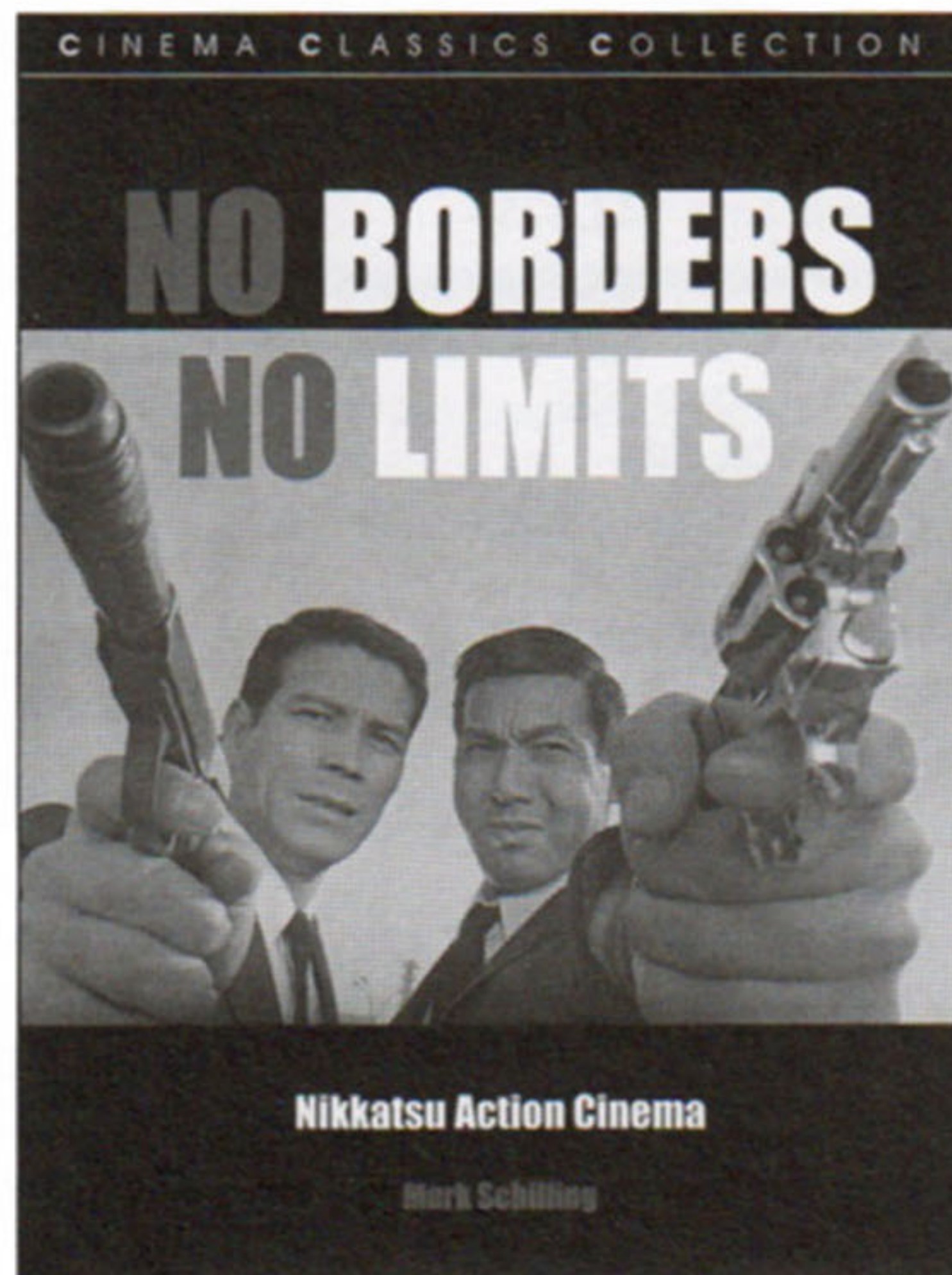
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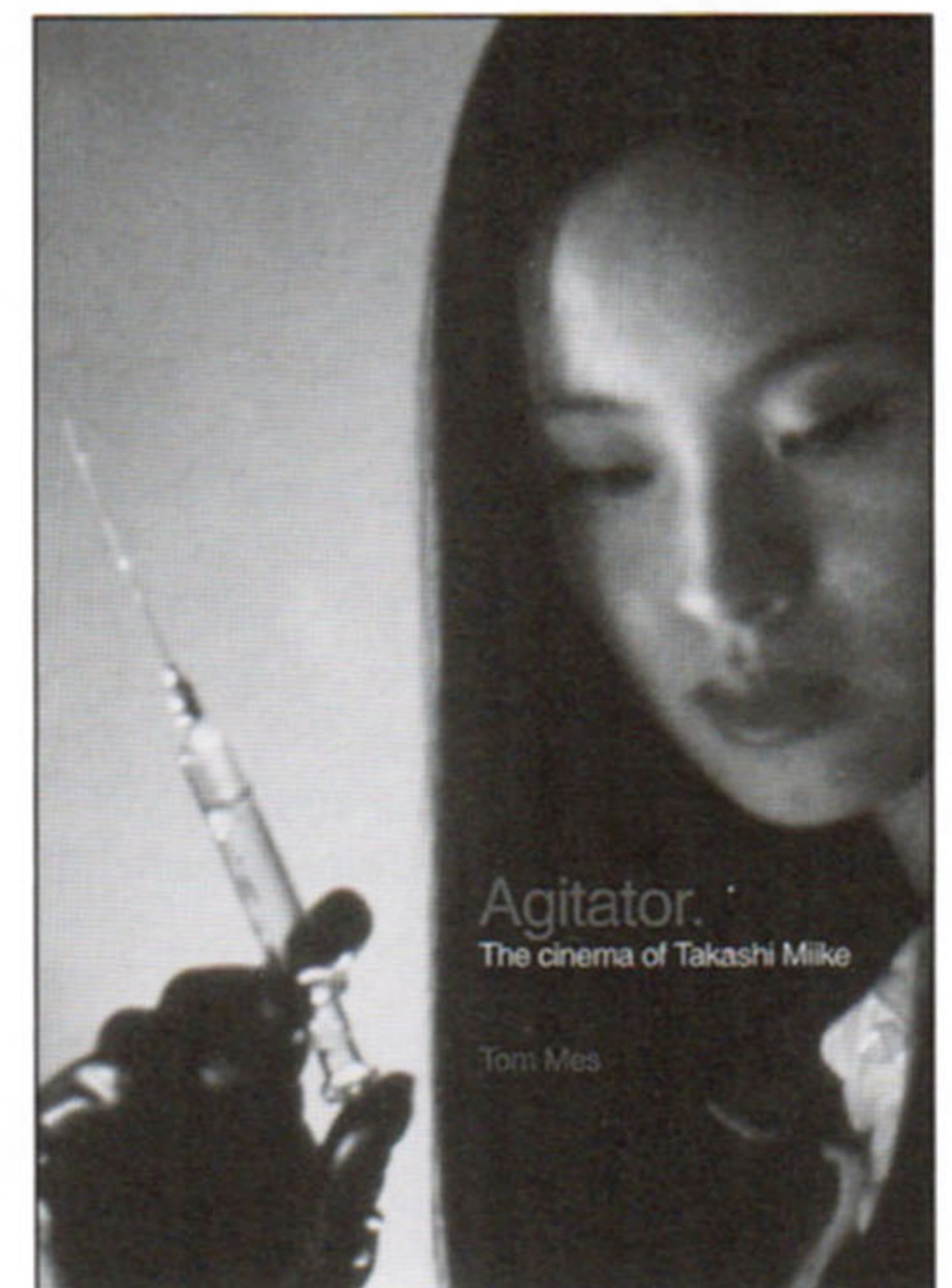
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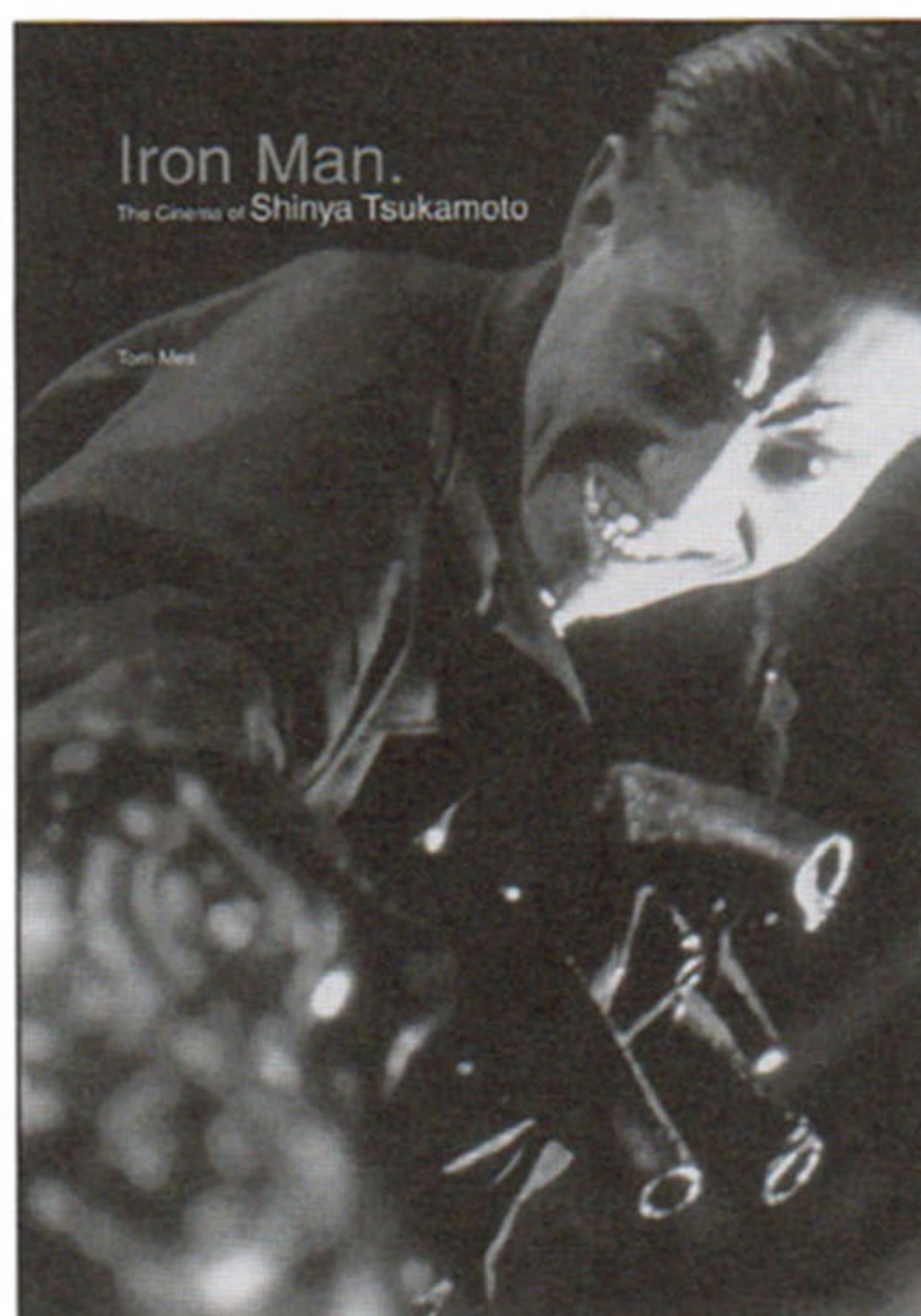
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